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**En route to a more democratic European Union –
An analysis of the communication strategies of
European Citizens' Initiatives (ECIs)**

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Les llengües de treball son castellà, català, anglès i francès

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Working languages: Catalan, Spanish, English and French

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Langues de travail: catalan, castillan, anglais et français

EN ROUTE TO A MORE DEMOCRATIC EUROPEAN UNION – AN ANALYSIS OF THE COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES OF EUROPEAN CITIZENS’ INITIATIVES (ECI’S)

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ABSTRACT: The success of the European Citizens' Initiative (ECI) as an instrument of direct democracy at EU-level is directly related with its communication. Citizens all over Europe have to be informed about this new democratic tool to make it work, which turns out to be a difficult endeavour.

This qualitative study shows ways and problems of communicating ECI's. The analysis of interviews with organizers of different ECI's provides good insight about their communication strategies, use of communication tools and media relations. Besides language and financial problems, we figure out specific disadvantages that the instrument ECI brings with it.

RESUM: L'èxit de l'iniciativa ciutadana europea (ICE) com a instrument de democràcia directa a nivell europeu està directament relacionat amb la seva promulgació. Els ciutadans d'arreu Europa han d'estar informats sobre aquest nou mecanisme per tal que es dugui a terme, la qual cosa suposa una dificultat.

Aquest estudi qualitatiu ens mostra els recursos i problemes en la divulgació de les ICE. Una anàlisi basat en entrevistes amb diferents organitzadors d'aquestes ICE que ens dona algunes idees sobre les seves estratègies de comunicació, així com l'ús d'eines de comunicació i relacions amb els mitjans de comunicació. A banda de les dificultats lingüístiques i financeres hi ha altres obstacles més específics relacionats amb l'ICE.

KEYWORDS: European Citizens' Initiative, ECI, communication, communication strategy, communication at EU-level, democratic deficit, identification, European demos, participation

PARAULES CLAU: Iniciativa ciutadana europea, ICE, divulgació i comunicació, estratègia de comunicació, divulgació a nivell europeu, dèficit democràtic, identificació, "poble" europeu, participació.

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1. Introduction

Europe's citizens are getting more and more sceptic. This master's thesis has been developed in a time that is heavily characterized by the cheerless impacts of the financial crisis 2008, big recessions and social problems in the European Union. The gap between richer northern and poorer southern member states is still getting bigger. United Kingdom's Prime Minister David Cameron wants to set a referendum about a possible exit of the EU for his country and recent surveys show the British citizens' favour of leaving the EU (cf. König 2013). Overall Euroscepticism is growing, also in other member states. The number of citizens that have a negative image of the EU keeps rising, as the Eurobarometer shows, while the ones who consider the EU as positive are getting less and less. Almost as much people conjure up for a positive image (30%) as for a negative (29%), remaining 39% of the inquired neutral (European Commission, 2012: 15). It seems "that everyone in the EU has lost faith in the project" (Leonard/Torreblanca 2013).

Meanwhile, the EU institutions are charged with more functions than ever. The integration process is going on and is bringing new possibilities for the EU and its citizens. To face the problem of Euroscepticism and making the instruments of the EU more public, 2013 is called "European Year of Citizens", dedicated to the rights that come with EU citizenship. Most of EU citizens don't know much about their rights and neither, that they already have the possibility to set topics at EU level themselves. We not only *are* the topic, we can *set* the topic. Why this point is important and which role especially communication plays within the process, will be discussed in this master's thesis.

With the European Citizens' Initiative (ECI), on April 1, 2012 the first formal mechanism of direct democracy has been implemented at EU level. By collecting one million signatures of European citizens, a proposal for legislation can be submitted to the EU commission. One year after establishing this mechanism, 16 initiatives have been registered, but only one of them has reached the required number of signatures. The most successful is the ECI "Water is a human right": more than one million signatures have already been collected. Concerning the huge number of European citizens – about 500 million people are living in the EU right now – the question rises, why it is so hard to collect one million signatures?

A recent research of the Eurobarometer shows, that 70% of EU citizens don't know that ECIs exist (cf. European Parliament 2013: 5). Apparently, no one has told them. The *demos* – body

of all democracy – mainly doesn't know about the democratic mechanisms in EU. But at times, where Euroscepticism is growing, this step would highly be necessary. Does communication lack here? In the present master's thesis I am going to investigate on this special problem: Communicating ECIs.

Citizens Initiatives in general are considered being bottom-up instruments, which have the power to force democracy. They give the citizens the opportunity to influence the government's law making process in a certain way. Especially for the EU, which is frequently criticized because of its democratic deficit, this new mechanism has to be considered. What's worth a democratic instrument if it cannot be used efficiently because citizens simply don't know about its existence? EU institutions and particularly ECIs themselves have to break out of this vicious circle by using communication strategies. EU institutions may make the ECIs more public in general, but the huge task of the initiatives is to make their own issues public. Hence, communication can be seen as an instrument, which helps the EU indirectly to reduce its democratic deficit.

In the following I will discuss the ECI as an instrument to diminish the democratic deficit in the EU and therefore the need to communicate this instrument. At the ECI-Day, celebrated on April 9, 2013 this need has been emphasized a lot by the initiators (cf. EESC 2013). Communication is seen as a "crucial factor, strongly influenced by the issue of languages" (ECAS 2013). I am going to analyse the communication strategies of current ECIs with the method of qualitative investigation to see how a selected number of ECI's is trying to meet this crucial factor. Among other things, communication is a clue element for an effective undertaking. Communicate themselves even may be the main objective of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) like ECIs to reach then further objectives – signatures or other support (cf. Pleil 2005: 9). At the end we may see how different communication strategies impact the success of several ECIs and implicitly also have an impact on the success of this democratic instrument in general.

1.1 Objectives and research questions

The general objective of this master's thesis is to analyse the communication strategies of European Citizens' Initiatives. As there has not been any investigation on this special field yet, I cannot rely on existing data. Moreover, there is no research about communication strategies of initiatives in general. This topic is only mentioned in literature about NGO's strategies in general. Consequently, the results of this thesis can serve as a base for further

research on communication of citizens' initiatives. Furthermore, there are some more detailed objectives:

- a) To explain the reasons of the existing democratic deficit in the EU
- b) To describe the ECI as a democratic instrument
- c) To explore communication strategies in the framework of corporate communication
- d) To specify possible communication tools for ECIs
- e) To discuss running communication of ECIs and its problems
- f) To give an outlook for future communication and impact of ECIs

Before starting with the empirical analysis of the communication strategies of ECIs, there has to be a detailed theoretical background for the general understanding. That includes important definitions and terms. In the first part the academic discussions about the democratic deficit as a big problem facing the EU will be summarized (e.g. Moravcsik 2002; Hix 2008; Hix/Høyland 2011). As we will see, the argumentation has developed in the course of time. More democratic mechanisms at EU-level have been established, although concerning the authors, there is still a democratic deficit in the EU.

After explaining the EU's democratic deficit, I am going to present the ECI as a possible instrument to diminish it. According to authors like Maurer & Vogel (2009), Hrbek (2012) or Szeligowska & Mincheva (2012), the democratic value of the ECI is questionable. By analysing the instrument, we will clearly see the chances but also the problems that are stressed by the authors. But the implementation of the ECI is already quite recent and its impact lacks to be proved in reality. So, the main opinion presented by the authors is that the development of the ECI has to be observed attentively, because its impact will depend on its development.

By explaining first how the ECI might diminish the democratic deficit of the EU, I want to offer an explanation to the lector why it is important to communicate this instrument. There shall be an understanding of the relevance of civic participation in democracies. To achieve this participation, initiators of ECIs have to communicate their issues and of course, EU institutions have to inform citizens which possibilities exist. Communication is becoming a central factor if we want to achieve acceptance of instruments of direct democracy.

Based on a definition of communication strategy in the context of theories about corporate communication, I want to describe and compare concrete actions taken by the ECIs. Effective communication can help the ECI becoming more popular and therefore more influential. The

aim of the 16 running ECIs is to collect signatures, and this can be achieved by an effective communication strategy. Theories of corporate communication (Van Riel 1995; Costa 1995; Pleil 2005) show us, how important communication is for an effective undertaking. We will look at the big range of available communication tools that already have been used and studied by other non-profit organizations. The comparison of those may show problems and opportunities for the development of communication strategies of ECIs. A special analysis has to be made about the issue of languages – a specific problem of international communication. We may also see how other factors like financing and organizational structure influence the effectiveness of communication.

The theoretical part should provide a general understanding about how communication strategies can be used to achieve a certain aim. The aim in this case is the collection of signatures among the citizens of the EU. Therefore the ECI is becoming an effective instrument for more democracy in the EU itself.

As this is a qualitative analysis there are no hard hypotheses to prove, but general research questions to answer. In my investigation these will be the following:

Why is there a democratic deficit in the EU? Why is communication important for the democratic instrument ECI? How is communication organized in ECIs? Which possibilities do they have? Which instruments use ECIs in practice to communicate their issues and to collect firms? How did they develop? Which problems see initiators of ECIs in the field of communication? How can ECIs and its communication develop in the future?

To answer these research questions, the theoretical background will be supplemented by an empirical study, which will be a qualitative investigation.

1.2 Methodology

If we want to analyse the communication strategies of ECIs, obviously there has to be an analysis of concrete cases apart from the theory. This may give us information about how ECIs are working and which problems they have to cope with.

1.2.1 Selecting the method

The field of communication strategies of ECIs still is merely investigated and has to be approached in a very open way. The aim is not to prove hypotheses but to answer research questions and later build hypotheses for further research. So, a qualitative research suits the best (cf. Lamnek 2005: 21). Qualitative approaches may describe “ein komplexes Phänomen

in seiner ganzen Breite”¹ (Brosius/Koschel/Haas 2008: 20). Central principles of a qualitative research are openness, investigation as communication, procedural characteristic of investigation and issue, reflexivity of issue and analysis plus flexibility (cf. Lamnek 2005: 20f) and therefore also shall be a guideline for my empirical research.

I chose semi-structured interviews as a method, because they offer the possibility to explore attitudes and opinions (cf. Brosius/Koschel/Haas 2008: 21), which means getting a deeper insight while interrogating. There shall be interviews with members of several ECIs and members of EU institutions. An advantage of qualitative interviewing is that the interviewee is an active part of the process and may also develop further questions (cf. Lamnek 2005: 335). This provides individual conversation, giving the interviewee the option to point out specific key aspects.

One special interview will be made with a member of the EU Commission and may serve as an expert interview. In expert interviews, the interviewee is an expert of the material, because he knows about the context of the issue (cf. Keuneke 2005: 262). That’s true for members of the EU commission, because they know about the institutional view about the ECIs. This interview can provide actual and specific information about the ECI as a democratic mechanism, but also about communication of this instrument in general.

The huge other part of the interviews will be problem-centred interviews with members of the ECIs, aiming to investigate different representations of the research issue (cf. Keuneke 2005: 260). In this case the issue are the different ECI’s communication strategies. By using an interview guide, the order and wording of the questions are laid out as the response is open-ended, overcoming all kind of stiffness. „Deduktion (theoretisch) und Induktion (empirisch) gehen Hand in Hand.“² (Lamnek 2005: 368) With this interview guide the answers will be comparable, even if the questions are not identically the same in all the interviews. Although the interviews will be in different languages and sometimes extended with individual digging deeper questions, the interviewer always has to maintain a guideline that has been developed with the help of the theoretical framework and the expert interview.

Apart from the theoretical background, a former quantitative analysis of the general facts about the several ECIs will be made. Official information that can be found on the ECI’s or EU Commission’s webpage does not have to be asked during the interview. This information

¹ “a complex phenomena with all its facets“

² “Deduction (theoretical) and induction (empirical) are going hand in hand.“

serves as a background to develop the interview guide and as a precondition to be able to dig deeper individually during the interviews.

1.2.2 Selecting cases

The objective in selecting cases for the following research project was not to achieve representativeness, but to find typical cases (cf. Lamnek 2005: 386). So, I consciously chose the interview partners.

In case of the expert interview there had to be premise to find someone who knows best about ECIs and communication strategies at EU level. The chosen interview partner is **Ferran Tarradellas Espuny**, head of the European Commission regional office in Barcelona. He studied journalism and worked in the press department of the representation of the European Commission in Madrid. Given the institutional and theoretical background of Tarradellas, the interview can be expected to deliver some actual expert insights for this master's thesis.

For the problem-centred interviews it was important to find interview partners who were members of ECIs and charged with its public relations or communication tasks. I contacted all of the 14 at the beginning of this investigation running ECIs (now, there are 16 running ECIs) and finally could count with interviewees of six of them. As all of the 14 ECIs have very diverse ambitions, vary in their organization and count with different numbers of collected signatures at the date of research, I didn't have to select by more criteria. It can be assumed, that by interviewing six out of 14 very different cases, diversity in the answers is given. The interviewed persons are:

- **Ana Gorey**, High Quality European Education for All.
- **Gael Drillon**, Pour une gestion responsable des déchets, contre les incinérateurs.
- **Jorn Moeskops**, One Single Tariff Act.
- **Klaus Sambor**, Unconditional Basic Income.
- **Pablo Sánchez Centellas**, Water and Sanitation are a Human Right.
- **Anonymous member**, Fraternité 2020.³

1.2.3 Elaborating the semi-structured interviews

All interviews should take place on the basis of a former analysis of the theoretical background and a quantitative analysis of general facts about the selected cases. These general facts will incorporate information that can be found on the websites of the six ECIs

³ Provided answers only under the condition of anonymity.

and of the European Commission. To be able to compare the results later on, this information will be collected within a table. First, this table will contain general information like the subject of each ECI, actual reached number of signatures, registration date and deadline for collection. Second, there will be presented a summary of communication tools that are used by the ECIs. This table may be complemented with results out of the qualitative interviews, so in the end there can be seen who uses what kind of instruments. This quantitative analysis also will contain facts about the ECI's websites, social media, RSS-feeds or podcasts.

Developing the semi-structured interviews, you have to keep in mind the already expressed research questions. These questions can be answered better if we develop several topics for the interview guide⁴. First, I want to clarify how communication is organized in the several ECIs. Is there a special person or team responsible for communication strategies? There should be a description of the tasks of the communication manager or the responsible person.

The next topic, and perhaps the most important, is the development of the communication strategy and tools. The interviewees should explain how they started to communicate their initiative and how several communication tools have been implemented in the course of time. The objective of the questions on this topic should be to investigate the spectrum of tools and the reason for this spectrum. Why was which communication tool developed? Which one is considered the most important and why? If the interviewee along his/her answers did not mention media relations, there has to be a special question about it.

A strongly connected field with communication tools is the audience. By developing a communication strategy, the audience always has to be in mind. Hence, there will be some questions on this topic. Does the ECI have a focus on a special audience and how is it defined? Is there a special strategy to reach more people or new audience? A form of attracting audience is for example to create events like conferences for a special or general audience or to distribute flyers. If the interviewee has not mentioned it earlier, there may be some special questions about these events.

An important topic in the semi-structured interviews also will be the problems each ECI has to face. There will be questions on the obvious problem of communication in different languages, but also about problems in general. Every problem and its possible solution should be discussed.

⁴ You may find the structure of the interviews in the appendix 6.2.1.

As only one Citizens' Initiative has reached the required number of signatures in seven member states yet, we may assume that all will keep on communicating. What are the ECIs planning for the future, will there be some special communication strategy or events? This topic may provide an outlook at the end of the interview. Finally, the topic funding has to be raised. Presumably, this topic already might have come up in the interviews, especially while talking about problems. If not, there will be some final questions about how the initiative is financed and whether there is a special budget for communication.

Considering the expert interview with the member of the European Commission, there also will be an interview guide, but this one has to be much more open than the one explained before.⁵ This interview will be split in two big blocks. One block is about communication at European level, problems and experiences. The expert may know about communication strategies of EU institutions. After a general consideration, concrete topics of ECI's communication will be emphasized. The second block of the interview will centre on the ECIs as an instrument to diminish the democratic deficit in the EU. Having talked about the difficulty to communicate at European level, a more realistic and practical view on the ECI instrument can be provided. As the interviewee Ferran Tarradellas works on this topic, he will be able to explain why this instrument is important for the EU and how EU institutions handle this issue.

Due to the fact that there will be interview partners of diverse countries, not all interviews can take place face-to-face. Some of the interviews will be realized via Skype and if there is no other chance, also via E-Mail (only in case of interviews with members of the ECIs, no expert interviews). Besides, also the language will differ from interview to interview. If it is possible, they should take place in the maternal language of the interviewee, giving him/her the possibility to speak without difficulties. This can be English, Spanish or German, as the investigator also speaks these languages. If the maternal language is not one out of these three, the interview has to be in English. All interviews will be recorded digitally.

1.2.4 Evaluating results

According to Mayring (cf. 2002: 89ff), the interviews will be transliterated to written texts.⁶ The original language will be used to maintain the exact significance of the spoken word. Grammatical inconsistency only will be removed roughly if there is some sort of stammering. There have not to be any other corrections, because none of the interview partners speaks

⁵ See appendix 6.1.1.

⁶ You may find the transcripts in the appendix 6.

some kind of dialect or broad accent. Pauses because of reflections will be marked in the transcript and so do other interruptions of the interview. If the interviewee shows some kind of document, for example, this will be marked in the transcript because it influences the spoken word.

After that, the transcripts will be evaluated and discussed. The evaluation is oriented on the different topics (cf. Mayering/Hurst 2005). The topics are the same as in the guided interviews: Organization of communication, development of communication strategy and tools, audience, problems, planning the future and last but not least, funding.

2. Theoretical background

2.1 Democratic deficit in the European Union

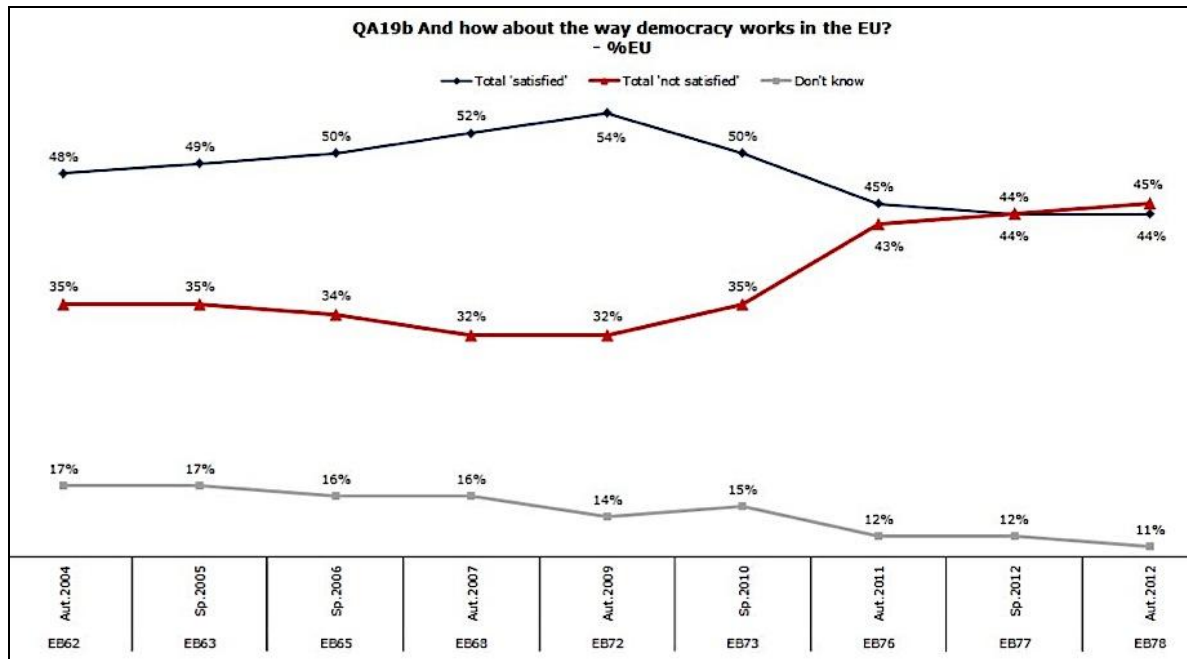


Figure 1: Satisfaction about the way democracy in EU works (European Commission 2012: 54)

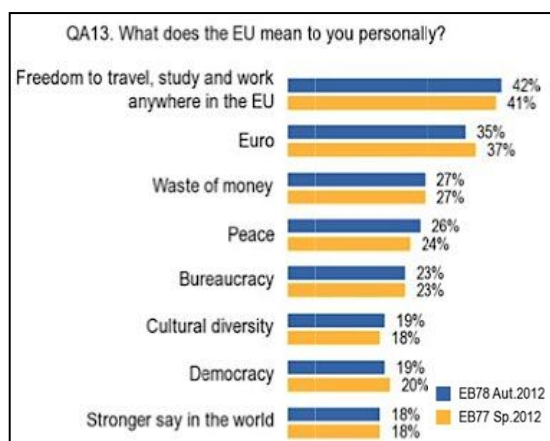


Figure 2: What does the EU mean to you? (European Commission 2012: 45)

45% of European citizens are totally unsatisfied with how democracy works in the EU. As a recent Eurobarometer analysis (figure 1) shows, this trend of dissatisfaction keeps growing since 2009 and has exceeded for the first time the number of citizens who are satisfied with European democracy in autumn 2012. The number of totally satisfied citizens during the

same time has decreased from 54% to 45%. It is interesting that this development begins during the ratification process of the Lisbon Treaty, when more people in general get aware of the EU and of democracy in EU. A further question of the Eurobarometer enquires about what the EU means to its citizens (figure 2). Although multiple answers were possible in this question, only 19% of the interrogated name democracy as a meaning of the EU, which situates the topic in the seventh position. The perception expressed in the data of Eurobarometer also is a frequently discussed topic in political science: The democratic deficit of the EU.

In the 1950s, when the European integration process began, democracy was no primary issue. The legitimacy came from ideas like peace and prosperity for Europe in spite of its democratic characteristics. But in the course of time this changed and especially in the 1990's and the ratification crisis, which followed the signing of the Maastricht Treaty in 1992, there was a calling for "democratizing the Union" (Chryssochoou 2003: 367). Also in the Maastricht Treaty, the term "European Citizenship" was introduced and the consideration about EU citizens' rights, entitlements and responsibilities began (cf. Saward 2013: 49f). As the EU expanded in competences and membership, policy making became more important and difficult and had to correspond better to the democratic systems and legitimacy of the member states. Step by step, there have been implemented democratic principles in the treaties until we can say that democracy has become "one of the founding principles of the EU" (Szeligowska/Mincheva 2012: 270).

In accordance with article 10(1) and article 10(2) of the Treaty on European Union (TEU), "the functioning of the Union shall be founded on representative democracy", "citizens are directly represented at Union level in the European Parliament", elected since 1979, and "Member States are represented in the European Council by their Heads of State or Government and in the Council by their governments". So, there is a mixture of direct and indirect representation of citizens at EU level. Nevertheless, the treaties, in political terms, do not say what the Union really is and therefore leave it as an "unidentified political object" (Best/Lambermont 2011: 11). With these concerns in mind, we may understand better the debate about the democratic deficit in the EU.

2.1.1 Democracy and Participation

Democracy is a way of organizing public life that allows citizens to articulate their interests and concerns within government; they participate in the governing process, because they elect their representatives who govern. There can be different approaches in defining democracy

(institutional, organizational, process-related) but all contain the element of participation within elections (e.g. Schumpeter 1966; Dahl 1956; Demetriou 2013). Elections are a central factor, because they allow citizens to choose who governs, choose between competing policies and therefore control the government indirectly (cf. Hix/Høyland 2011: 130). By participating, citizens in democracies may have both influence on polity inputs and policy outputs (cf. Scharpf 1999). As the EU, unlike its member states, cannot count with common “foundational myths” or other forms of common identity as “given sources of democratic legitimacy” (Best/Lambermont 2011: 12), civic participation gets even more important to legitimate the system.

With the introduction of direct elections of the European Parliament (EP) by European citizens in 1979, an important step towards a more democratic system in the EU has been made. Elections are held every five years and in a series of treaty reforms the EP has been given more power in co-decision with the Council and in appointment powers of the president of the Commission and the College of Commissioners. The EP as an institution elected by the citizens has become stronger, which directly represents the process of the EU of becoming a democratic system (cf. Hix/Høyland 2011: 131).

Nevertheless, only in the Constitutional Treaty of 2004, which never has been ratified, a “participatory democracy” had been recognized for the EU. As mentioned above, the actual Treaty of the European Union in spite of that talks about “representative democracy” and the “right of every citizen to participate”. But “simply having opportunities for participation does not equate to participatory democracy” (Monaghan 2012: 285). This aspect already is an important one to consider when we talk about Citizens’ Initiatives and leads to the debate about democratic deficit in the EU. But there is another problem, frequently discussed in literature about the EU.

Democracy implicates that there is a participating *demos*. This Greek word for the collective citizen body can hardly be translated in a European context. *Demos* would be “a community of politically equal individuals, deliberating about the common good in a single, transnational public sphere, and expressing their political will in a unified global or regional political sphere” (Cheneval/Schimmelfennig 2013: 334). But authors who focus on this socio-psychological factor argue that a European *demos* does not exist. A lack of feeling of community amongst European citizens across the different member states may be a barrier to the creation of a democratic EU. Cheneval & Schimmelfennig (2013: 335) therefore determine that “EU is a ‘demoicracy’ – a polity of multiple demoi”. For achieving a

democracy, all European citizens have to see themselves as part of a democratic whole. If this common civic body might be created in future or if we in fact live in a democracy that cannot be turned to a democracy, remains an open question (cf. Chryssochoou 2003: 368).

2.1.2 The democratic-deficit-debate

First concerns about the democratic deficit in the European Union were expressed in the 1980s. After first academic considerations of Marquand (1979), both anti-Europeans and pro-Europeans raised the debate. The principal argument was that with the Single European Act significant powers have been passed up to European level without having created sufficient parliamentary or judicial control over these powers. Voices became louder and louder until in the 1990s and swept from member states that traditionally had stable democratic institutions to all kind of (newer) member states (cf. Hix 2008: 67).

There can be pointed out five main sets of claims in the democratic-deficit-debate (cf. Føllesdal/Hix 2006; Hix 2008; Chryssochoou 2003). One claim is that executive power at EU level increases while national parliamentary control is decreasing. The EU Commission, which elaborates legislative proposals, at the same time has to cope with the executive function of the Union. As the EU has increased its competences, more legislation takes place at EU level and affects all member states. But the Commission often is considered as an “undemocratic institution” (Chryssochoou 2003: 370), because its commissioners are appointed by national parliaments, without having participated in any elections. Besides that, the representatives in the EU Council at the same time are members of the national governments (executive bodies of the member states). When deciding at EU level, they may ignore their national parliaments, and therefore there is a shift of parliamentary control to executive control. Furthermore, there is a “legitimation gap” if the Council makes use of qualified majority voting (QMV) (cf. Mauer/Vogel 2009: 7). Then, some member states can be outvoted and the national parliaments behind them have no longer to be taken into consideration.

A second claim is directly connected with the already described one. It is the concern that the European Parliament is too weak. While power of the national parliaments is decreasing, the power of the European Parliament is not increasing appropriately. Although the ordinary legislative procedure establishes co-decision of Parliament and Council, there are still many issues handled in special legislative procedures without co-decision. For example in consultation procedures or consent procedures, the Parliament cannot work actively on the legislation draft. In case of the adoption of the budget, of membership of the EU or

association agreements, the Treaties establish this latter kind of procedures, where the Parliament only can say “yes” or “no”. Moreover, citizens are better connected to the members of their national parliament than to the MEP’s.

This leads to the third claim: There are no real European elections. EU citizens merely vote on EU policies, which can be observed in three components. First, only some member states hold referendums on EU membership or treaty reforms. Second, national elections certainly are fought on domestic in spite of European issues, although European policy has direct effects on national policy. And third, not even EP elections are really about EU, because the national parties and media also set them in a national context. Therefore, it is difficult for citizens to distinguish which are EU or national policies.

The fourth claim refers to the alleged distance of the EU. It describes the assumption that European citizens are not used to a hybrid governing system like the EU, cannot understand the functions of the EU institutions (that are different from the domestic) and therefore cannot identify with it. For example, the EU Commission is neither pure bureaucracy nor a government and appointed by an obscure procedure. Highly technocratic policy processes also prevent citizens from understanding and catching the ideas of the EU. Other aspects that force this distance from its citizens are the already mentioned elections without EU issues and less popular MEP’s.

Finally, there is the claim of policy drift. As a result of the former mentioned problems, it can be assumed that the policies EU citizens expect or want are different from the policies they actually get. Especially with the qualified majority voting system in the council, there can arise policies that are not supported by a majority of the EU citizens.

These five general claims however are not universally accepted. For example, Giandomenico Majone (2005) argues, that the EU does not require the same democratic legitimation as a nation state, because the EU has a more regulatory than welfare function. To be able to exert regulations, these EU policies should be isolated from the majority democratic legitimation process. Democracy even could provide the EU from taking best practice decisions, although Majone also argues, that decision-making at EU-level should be more transparent.

Andrew Moravcsik (2002) is one of the political scientists who clearly defend the existing legitimation system of the EU and criticizes all the five claims mentioned above. He insists that national parliaments are still the most accountable in Europe, which are democratically legitimated and send their representing ministers to the EU Council. Therefore, the Council

does not have to cope with a democratic deficit and as it remains the most powerful institution in the EU legislation process, there is no shift to the executive. Furthermore he says that EU policy-making is much more transparent than most of domestic policy making and the system of checks and balances better elaborated, as the member states always have to take decisions in common.

Other authors also admit that these claims are only part of the truth. For each claim there can be found a counter-argument, always depending on how each institution is evaluated and which pro's and contra's are attached to what with which importance. Simon Hix for example says that "four of these claims are largely wrong" (2008: 72), without denying that there is also some kind of certainty in all of the claims. In his opinion, the only really missing element for more democracy is a contest for EU power and policy. As political parties are the main actors in elections at domestic and European level, as in referendums, they play a central role in legitimating the system democratically. But the problem is that at EU level there are no real political parties, like we know them from national systems, but political groups in the EP and transnational party federations outside the EP. Coalitions in the EP are formed issue by issue and as a result, there is a lack of party competition at EU level. Without a governing majority in the EP, especially the fifth claim of policy shift can be sustained. Depending on the issue, the citizen has to fear that the party he voted decides in a different way and the controlling character of an opposition is missing.

2.1.3 Actual standing

The debate about the democratic deficit in the EU developed in the course of time. Multiple opportunities for citizens to participate have been created (elections of EP, consultations, petitions, citizens' initiatives), but "the nature, quality, effectiveness of these participation opportunities and whether they are genuine is [still] questioned" (Monaghan 2012: 290). Apart of that, we also have to consider that "modern citizenship is much more passive" (cf. Demetriou 2013: 2) and it is especially hard to motivate citizens to participate, which is the basis of a more democratic Union.

None of the former mentioned claims of democratic deficit in the EU can be completely denied. But the EU is working on it. Examples are the implementation of the ECI that will be discussed below, the European year of the citizen that might bring the issues of the EU closer to its citizens and reverse and some other ideas to close the gap between the EU and its citizens. For example, there is the current discussion about elections of the president of the

EU Commission (cf. Tarradellas: Interview 02.05.13⁷). The idea is that with the next EP-elections in May 2014, all European Parties also have to nominate one of its members as president of the Commission and citizens get the right to vote on it. This would democratize the up to now “undemocratic” Commission a little bit and improve the scenario described in the first claim.

Furthermore, with the financial crisis in the recent years a European topic has developed that affects all citizens, although mainly in a negative way. But for the first time, more people pay attention to European decisions. So, we could assume that the next elections will be fought clearly on European issues and citizens also understand them better. This could improve the third and second claim. The claim about the weak EP will remain, although its powers have increased. But the Council is still considered the more powerful institution. The organization of political parties on EU level and the non-existence of a permanent majority or opposition substitute this problem.

2.2 The European Citizens’ Initiative (ECI)

The European Citizens’ Initiative (ECI) is the first transnational instrument of participatory democracy in the world. It is a “very unique expression [...] in a supranational context” (Cuesta-López 2012: 257). Since the 1990’s, mechanisms of direct democracy have been discussed in the EU institutions and developed especially after concrete proposals of the EP in 2002 (cf. Maurer/Vogel 2009: 8f). Finally, the ECI-resolution has been passed on February 16, 2011 and came to force on April 1, 2012. According to article 11(4) of the TEU, the ECI is established as the following:

„Not less than one million citizens who are nationals of a significant number of Member States may take the initiative of inviting the European Commission, within the framework of its powers, to submit any appropriate proposal on matters where citizens consider that a legal act of the Union is required for the purpose of implementing the Treaties.“

For procedures and conditions of the ECI, article 24 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFUE) says that the EP and Council shall adopt the required provisions. They did so in elaborating Regulation No 211/2011 on the citizens’ initiative, where all characteristics of the ECI are described in detail.

If we compare the ECI with other national popular initiatives from member states of the EU, the ECI is a transnational variation of the agenda initiative that is recognized in the Austrian, Hungarian, Italian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Polish, Portuguese, Slovenian and Spanish

⁷ You find the transcript of the interview in the appendix 6.1.2.

Constitutions and falls into the category of legislative propositions, not constitutional (cf. Cuesta-López 2012: 259). Even though there are variations of popular initiatives in most of the member states, for some of them this instrument is completely new (cf. Tarradellas: Interview 02.05.13).



Figure 3: Rights of participation in the EU (cf. The Greens 2011: 24)

The ECI is situated within two other opportunities for citizen's participation at EU level (see figure 3). Consultations of the EU Commission and Petitions submitted

via the member state to the EP are other forms that already existed. But for this thesis, only the ECI is important, yet as it is the only mechanism of direct democracy, that directly leads to a legislative proposal, if it is successful.

2.2.1 Launching process

According to Regulation No 211/2011 on the citizens' initiative, an ECI can only be submitted by "citizens' committees", which have to consist of a group of at least seven EU citizens from seven different member states. This citizens' committee has to present its initiative to the Commission, which has to prove it within two months. If the initiative manifestly falls outside the competences of the EU Commission to propose legislation, is manifestly contrary to the EU's fundamental democratic values or manifestly abusive, frivolous or vexatious, the Commission can reject the initiative. This first step guarantees that there is no collection of signatures without sense, because of a lack of competences of the EU. Up to now eight proposals for initiatives have been rejected.⁸ However, if the Treaty basis is not clear or the legal competence is disputed, the Commission must allow such kind of

⁸ For example, an initiative called "Fortalecimiento de la participación ciudadana en la toma de decisiones sobre la soberanía colectiva" has been rejected by explaining that the EU Commission does not have the competence to set up a legislative proposal in this field. (cf. European Commission 2012a). Other rejected proposals were about nuclear power or the European Anthem in Esperanto.

initiatives. Once the ECI is successfully submitted, one million signatures (called officially “statements of support”) must be collected within 12 months’ time.⁹

The collected signatures have to be from EU citizens of at least a quarter of all member states. That means, currently signatures from seven member states are necessary, respecting a certain

Member State	Number
Austria	14250
Belgium	16500
Bulgaria	13500
Cyprus	4500
Czech Republic	16500
Denmark	9750
Estonia	4500
Finland	9750
France	55500
Germany	74250
Greece	16500
Hungary	16500
Ireland	9000
Italy	54750
Latvia	6750
Lithuania	9000
Luxembourg	4500
Malta	4500
Netherlands	19500
Poland	38250
Portugal	16500
Romania	24750
Slovakia	9750
Slovenia	6000
Spain	40500
Sweden	15000
United Kingdom	54750

Figure 4: Minimum number of signatories by member state.

number per member state. This percentage is calculated by multiplying the number of MEP’s of this country with 750 (see figure 4). Every EU citizen at voting age (18 years old, in Austria 16) has the right to sign ECIs. In principle, organizers can collect signatures online and on paper. The Commission is providing free Open Source software that can be used by the ECIs to collect signatures online. However, the signing process may differ in different member states. Some require identity card number or other personal identification number, while others allow signing by only declaring name, address and birth date. Once having collected the signatures, the ECI organizers have to submit them to the relevant national authorities in each country for verification and certification. These authorities shall ensure that all signatories are valid and the list does not contain false names or duplications and the ECI can be passed to the Commission.

Every successful ECI gains the right to receive an official statement of the Commission and to have a public hearing in the EP, where organizers can discuss their issues and demands with members of the Commission and MEP’s. Only after that, the Commission decides whether to set up a legislative proposal or not. So, while statement of the Commission and public hearing are obligatory, the legislative proposal is not.

In case of a legislative proposal, the normal approving process of EU legislation begins. The proposal passes to EP and Council, which have to co-decide about it. In this phase there can be redrafting, negotiating and rejecting of the initiative. But in best-case scenario, the ECI, which has converted to a legislative proposal, passes all institutions until being approved officially as European legislation that has to be implemented by the member states.

⁹ Because of especially hard conditions for collecting signatures at the beginning (online collection formulary did not work well; instrument extremely unknown by the citizens), the Commission extended the one-year-deadline for the first registered ECI’s. If they were launched before November 1, 2012, their new deadline now is November 1, 2013, ignoring the exact additional time to collect signatures (cf. European Commission 2012b).

2.2.2 Possibilities and Problems

In total, 29 ECIs have been launched up to the present, including the ones that never started to collect signatures. Currently, only one of the 16 running initiatives has managed collecting over one Million signatures in more than seven member states (Water is a human right) and the ECIs “have not met the Commission’s optimistic targets set the previous year” (ECAS 2013: 1). Even though, we have to consider that the instrument has just been installed and the first year at least has shown that there is a general interest in using the ECI in different policy areas of the EU (media pluralism, education, animal testing, climate change and energy, voting rights, roaming charges, speed limits, mobility). This has to be taken in mind when talking about possibilities and problems of the ECIs in the next paragraphs.

2.2.2.1 Diminishing the democratic deficit of the EU

Current literature cannot give an ultimate answer if the instrument of the ECI helps to diminish the democratic deficit of the EU. Authors like Hrbek (2012) or Best & Lambermont (2011) argue, that the ECI rather is an instrument of direct democracy, but more an “agenda initiative”, yet that there is only a minority putting an concern on the agenda, but without giving all European citizens the possibility to vote on it. Without binding obligation for the EU institutions to react with legislation, the ECI cannot be considered as a pure instrument of direct democracy (cf. Best/Lambermont 2011: 13). The Commission still has to be considered to be the main player (cf. Szeligowska/Mincheva 2012: 282). It’s true, binding function lacks. The European Commission argues that it has to be like this for preventing the ECI to come under the purview of wealthy economic interests of single actors (cf. Tarradellas: Interview 02.05.13). Instruments of direct democracy always implicate a loss of ability for politicians to set policies, an initiative might curb the actions of the representative “through an ex post correcting vote or an ex ante threat” (Gregor/Smith 2013: 36).

But if we check the general claims about democratic deficit in the EU, we can see that there are contributions to diminishing it by the ECI, even without being a pure direct-democratic instrument. First, ECIs help to increase the legitimacy of legislative proposals of the EU Commission. This institution had been criticized for being undemocratic and shifting power to the executive (see first of five general claims about democratic deficit). But with setting up legislative proposals in the field of ECIs, irrespective of their success, its legitimacy can be improved. Moreover, furthering the identification of the citizens with the political system of the EU can be achieved. The ECI is an additional possibility to participate, which brings ideas of the citizens closer together with the governing system. During the last years, the number of

petitions addressed to the EP and complaints to the EU ombudsman increased significantly (cf. Maurer/Vogel 2009: 12ff). As the EU increased its competences, also the interest of its citizens grew, because EU legislation is affecting more and more of their lives. The ECI may substitute this movement. So, the gap between EU institutions and its citizens can be reduced. For this reasons the ECI “apunta en la buena dirección”¹⁰ (Vintró/Bilbao 2011: 97). The agenda-setting function of the ECI also can help during the next EP elections. One claim is that these elections are fought on domestic issues. Most ECIs have started with domestic issues and developed into something that has an impact on citizens in different member states. They are examples of common interest, which can be picked up by EU parties. So, these topics also can be relevant during the EP elections in May, 2014 and help them becoming more European. Furthermore, there is the option for ECIs to mobilize some MEP’s specifically for their issue and have them as official supporters.

2.2.2.2 Expectations and frustrations

Even though the competences of the EU have increased, the principle of subsidiarity is very important in multilevel-governance in Europe. There might be a citizens’ committee of seven persons from different member states who consider that their issue has to be solved in common. But if the field falls out of the competences of the EU or can be resolved better at member state or other level, the Commission will reject the proposal right from the beginning. Therefore it is very important to know that the ECI is no instrument to bypass the normal legislative process. The problem is, that some citizens may think if petitions, consultations and other usual forms of setting a topic did not work, the ECI-way has to do so. But normally, if all other possibilities did not provoke the expected result, it is very improbable that the ECI does (cf. Tarradellas: Interview 02.05.13). Here, the ECI might “increase frustrations and the feeling that the EU does not ‘listen to the people’” (Trzaskowski 2010: 263). This is the first point of the ECI process, where expectations of organizers may be not fulfilled and one of the most difficult ones for them to understand.

During the collection process there may surge other obstacles. The number of one million signatures seems to be small, but as practice has shown, it is not easy to collect them within the EU. Besides of the language and communication problems that will be discussed later in more detail, also the infrastructure for collecting firms is not optimal. Along the ECI-day (09/04/13), organizers of ECIs and members of other committees elaborated a list of eight important problems that have to be resolved as soon as possible (cf. EESC 2013a). First, they

¹⁰ „points to the right direction“

consider the signature collection time too short and want to extend it to 18-24 months. Second, the ID requirements that remain in some member states should be removed, because they deter many citizens from signing. Other important points are to improving the online signature collection system, removing the CAPTCHA from the online signature collection website and making it more user-friendly. Furthermore, they call for providing an ECI “help desk infrastructure” by EU staff, which could offer practical and legal advice, logistical assistance and translation services. Especially for small citizen groups using the ECI this could be useful, because they have problems to organize themselves. Although data protection is very important, one point of the list also claims to allow ECI campaigns to collect and retain supporters’ contact information for further emailing, dialogue and debate. All of these claims could be improved by the Commission, but the institution is not willing to facilitate all of them. For example, Maroš Šefčovič, vice president of the Commission, said on the ECI day, concerning the online signature collection system: “The tools are designed to facilitate the collection of signatures – nothing more.” (Šefčovič 2013) Although the Commission wants to raise public awareness for ECIs in general (like for example in citizens’ dialogues of vice president Vivianne Reding), the rules cannot be modified that easily, as the organizers would like them to be. That kind of inflexibility can cause frustration. But problems not only occur at EU level, but also at member state level. For example, 12 member states have not correctly implemented the ECI legislation yet (cf. Šefčovič 2013).

After having collected one million signatures, the expectation normally is that the issue will be converted into a legislative proposal. But in fact, the Commission only is obligated to publish a statement and facilitate a public hearing in the EP for the organizers of the ECI. Even after the public hearing, the ECI can be terminated without converting in a legislative proposal. After the endeavor of having collected the signatures successfully, this can lead to “big disappointment and rejecting the EU” (Trzaskowski 2010: 265). Apparently, the Commission does not have to react as the organizers would like it to. This is why the Commission will have a “crucial role” in the impact of ECIs (cf. Szeligowska/Mincheva 2012: 280). It may come under certain pressure to convert at least one ECI in a legislative proposal to confirm that it is an effective instrument of direct democracy. Ferran Tarradellas, head of the EU Commission’s office in Barcelona, says: “Es muy difícil que la Comisión Europea si recibe una Iniciativa que cumple con todos los tramites no haga una iniciativa legislativa si cae dentro de la competencia de la UE. Otra cosa es qué iniciativa legislativa va

a hacer.”¹¹ The Commission always has the possibility to modify the issue of the former ECI when it comes to a legislative proposal. After consulting different interest groups and experts, the Commission may come to the conclusion that a redraft is necessary. And finally, even if the Commission has set up a proposal, it has to be approved by Council and Parliament of the EU, which is another obstacle.

Hence, at many points of the ECI process, big expectations can change into frustrations. Mostly because of the fact that an ECI only has “input-legitimacy”, the endeavour of setting up such kind of initiative can be seen by people as a waste of time, especially by people who expected that this instrument would have more impact (cf. Hrbek 2012: 44). After all, the EU institutions do not need ECIs to set up legislative proposals and without binding consequences civic endeavour may end up next to nothing.

On the other hand, this new instrument provides a new possibility: transnational communication in Europe. Right from the beginning of the launching process, there has to be collaboration from citizens of at least seven member states. Later on, the signatories have to proceed from different member states, which requires building EU-wide networks. There can be opened up transnational discourses by facing problems that exist in similar, but at the same time diverse ways all over Europe (cf. Maurer/Vogel 2009: 10). This form of transnationality may finally contribute to “creating a European public space, perceived as an indispensable condition for generating a European demos” (Hrbek 2012a: 370). As the lack of a European demos is one of the problems of the EU, the ECI could help in this way to enable its democratic legitimacy.

Furthermore, we can assume that most of the ECIs may count with some kind of support from already existing organizations or foundations, trade unions or church organizations (cf. Hrbek 2012: 46). Even if the citizen’s committee consists of seven ordinary citizens, who have not been member of such organizations before, they might search for these supporters. Especially other Non-Governmental-Organizations (NGOs) are supposed to be interesting for and interested in collaboration with ECIs. These organizations already have some kind of transnational network, which makes the collection of sufficient signatories easier. Network-building all over Europe can be intensified with the new possibility of setting up an ECI.

¹¹ “It is very difficult for the European Commission not to set up a legislative proposal if it receives an initiative that complies with all requirements and is within the competences of the EU. Another question is which kind of legislative initiative it will set up.”

NGOs count with confidence advantage of citizens respective to political parties, because they represent alternative values (cf. Pleil 2005: 9). This can be useful by building a transnational discourse that is heard and understood by the people. Even if the ECI is not an instrument of pure direct democracy, within this kind of transnational communication it can help to reduce the democratic deficit of the EU. We see, that communication is a central factor of making the ECI an effective instrument. But it's the little things that cause big problems. Transnational communication is difficult to manage, even if it is a very positive thing in general. In the following, this kind of communication will be examined.

2.3 ECIs and Communication

European Citizens' Initiatives give citizens the possibility to set a specific topic on the EU-agenda. As they have to collect one million signatures for a successful endeavor, it is most important to reach certain audience. With setting up an ECI, communication gets fundamental in the planning process. Communication even can be considered as the main objective of nonprofit-organizations (like citizens' initiatives), because it is the instrument to gain publicity, what is important to reach further objectives (cf. Pleil 2005: 9). As Joan Costa (1995: 46) describes it: "La comunicación es el sistema nervioso central de la organización."¹² This means all kind of organizations, including nonprofit. Other authors affirm this, for example Mazo del Castillo (1994: 344) considers communication as "fundamental para explicarse la vida de una organización o agrupación humana"¹³. Sincerely, communication varies depending on issues and type of organization. But in general, it is of highest importance for an undertaking like ECIs. In the following there will be a description of communication strategies of organizations in general and later concretized on ECIs.

2.3.1 Definition of "communication strategy"

It is in the field of studies on organizations, where we find different approaches to their communication strategies (cf. Ginesta 2009). Depending on the author, there are different classifications about communication models and I will just show the most classical ones to understand later, where we can collocate the communication strategies of ECIs.

A quite general classification is the dual model of communication in organizations that describes Spaniard Mazo del Castillo (1994: 344-352). He figures out the "modelo de comercialización o de marketing"¹⁴ and the "modelo de comunicación integrada"¹⁵. While the

¹² "Communication is the central nervous system of an organization."

¹³ "fundamental for an organization or human association to explain itself"

¹⁴ "commercialization or marketing model"

former is oriented in achieving concrete results, normally describing the situation of the product in the best market conditions, the latter is much more complex, yet as it is centered on coordination of different, parallel running communication issues that can be positioning, public relations, formal and informal communication at the same time. Depending on the objectives of the organization, the one or the other might be more successful, but what is important in his findings is, that behind every kind of communication there exists some philosophy and that is the focal point of developing a communication strategy (cf. Mazo del Castillo 1994: 350).

A more detailed idea of communication strategies provides the Dutch author van Riel (1995). He uses the term *corporate communication* to describe the objective of all communication within an organization. Corporate communication “may be seen as a framework in which various communications specialists – working from a mutually established strategic framework – can integrate their own communications input. The basic philosophy underlying this framework can be described as directing the company’s communications policies” (cf. Van Riel 1995: 1). So, the communication strategy is closely linked with the triangle of corporate strategy – corporate identity – corporate image, that are the basis for an efficient communication.

Many authors emphasize on these basic corporate concepts, because they are important as a guideline for communication of an organization (e.g. Costa 1995; Gregory 1996; Villafañe 1999). This idea of corporate communication can be situated within the above-described integrated model of communication of Mazo del Castillo. So, corporate communication develops proceeding from a corporate identity and image. Identity and image have to be separated: The former is the proper essence of the organization, which is expressed by its presence and manifestations, whereas the latter is the result of the identity and expressed by actions and messages to the external, what converts the image to a strategic instrument (cf. Costa 1995: 42-45).

Situated next to corporate identity and image, van Riel (1995: 2ff.) then defines three types of communication: management, marketing and organizational communication. The first can be seen from two perspectives: intern and extern communication. These two types have to go hand in hand. Other authors affirm that. For example, Spaniard Martín Martín (1998) also talks about intern and extern communication that are both to be considered in a communication strategy. Intern communication is all related to internal support within the

¹⁵ “model of integrated communication”

organization and basic to the external communication, which is everything related to audience outside the organization (cf. Martín Martín 1998: 29). Because of this reason van Riel considers management communication as the most important one, a “key function” (Van Riel 1995: 9). Managers have to plan, organize, command, coordinate and control all communication, both to develop a shared vision of the company within the organization and to communicate this vision to win support of external stakeholders.

Marketing and organizational communication then are “necessary to support managers in improving the effectiveness of their communication responsibilities” (Van Riel 1995: 10). Normally, most monetary budget goes to marketing communication, because it has to go all out supporting the disposal of particular goods or services and contributing to the promotional mix. On the other hand, organizational communication is directed primarily to “target-groups” and covers “public relations, public affairs, investor relations, labour market communication, corporate advertising, environmental communication and internal communication” (Van Riel 1995: 12).

Even if the different types of communication are overlapping, depending also on the author’s classification, we can observe a division of marketing and other communication. “Si, de un lado, la publicidad y el márketing prometen y la organización se compromete, las relaciones públicas deben preciarse como vehiculadoras y justificadoras de esta promesa y, además, deben desarrollar acciones que les permiten estar presentes en los medios.”¹⁶ (Ordeix/Ginesta 2012: 180) As these authors show, there can be made a distinction between these two types of communication and this is considered to be very important.

We may also observe that in case of the ECIs. They do not want to sell something, but to mobilize citizens and therefore enter in the field of public relations, or organizational communication, following van Riel. So, their communication strategy has to be considered as public relations oriented, but also in the field of management communication, that has to be coherent internally as well as externally. The British author Gregory (1996: 105) puts it in a nutshell: “Strategy is the overall approach that is taken to a programme or campaign. It is the co-ordinating theme or factor, the guiding principle, the big idea, the rationale behind the tactical programme.”

¹⁶ “If, at one hand, publicity and marketing promise and the organization compromises itself, public relations have to be engines and supporters of this promise and furthermore, have to develop actions that make presence in the media possible.”

2.3.2 *Planning communication*

At the time of planning the communication strategy, there are also different ideas of several authors how to structure and organize it. Van Riel (1995: 142) proposes three phases of the planning process: first, the location of communication (hierarchical position within the organization, tasks, departments...), second, the organization of the communication (planning, integrating it in other cycles...) and third, the coordination of both the functions of and the procedures relating to all communication activities. This is a more organizational point of view and can be important for ECIs at the time when deciding about how to set up the communication. As ECIs are running only one year, they do not have to consider different cycles, because everything will occur in one cycle. But strategically it is important to find a basis or a department and to face coordination of the different countries involved.

As a second step, concrete planning – the “tactical programme”, as Gregory describes it – can begin. There can be found some main steps in planning communication (cf. Pescador 2009; Gregory 1996). First, there has to be a detailed consideration about the issues and objectives of the organization. Only when it is clear what the ECI represents, what ambitions are prevailing and what are the possibilities and delimitations of the endeavour, a coherent communication strategy is possible. After this general consideration of the ECI’s objectives, concrete aims of the communication strategy have to be defined. Do they want to inform, to create a basis for dialogue, collect funding, find supporters or only collect signatures? Although these ambitions are interdependent, in planning communication there has to be defined what are the most and less important steps. This depends very much on the issue of the ECI – if there is already a running public dialogue about its topic, the point of departure is different to a completely new idea, that never has been discussed on EU-level before.

Having defined these objectives, the concrete strategy has to be planned. Here, the audience has to be included. How can a certain audience be reached, do we want to connect directly with other media or concentrate our work on reaching the audience solely? Which instruments are to be used? Also the former mentioned contacts to other NGOs or to MEP’s have to be included in the strategy. Grunig & Hunt (1984: 21ff.) define four models of public relations that can be set up by organizations. First, there is the *press agent/publicity model*. This model has the concrete purpose of propaganda and is a one-way model, because the organization only communicates propaganda and does not build up a dialogue with its receivers. The second model is the *public information model*, which is centred on the dissemination of information. Truth and credibility is very important in this model, which is also one-way

based. Later, there are also two-way communication models, where the focus also lies on receiving feedback from the audience. The *two-way asymmetric model* has the purpose of scientific persuasion and is not balanced, because press agents or publicists who do some kind of research on attitudes and behaviour of the persuaded publics mainly use it. Finally, the two-way symmetric model follows an approach of mutual understanding, where practitioners serve as mediators between organizations and their publics. Already in 1984, when Grunig & Hunt designed these models, they examined that most of NGOs use the one-way public information model. And recent studies show us, that this is still the state of reality (e.g. Taylor et al. 2001; Naudé et al. 2004; Pleil 2005). Even though the possibility of feedback has increased a lot with the use of the Internet, only very few NGOs build up a two-way symmetric communication model. Most of them centre their interests on informing the public about their undertaking and try to communicate it directly to stakeholders. The “written word” remains most important (cf. Pleil 2005: 12). We may see in the following empirical study of current ECIs, whether this observation also is true in their case.

Next steps in the planning process (cf. Pescador 2009; Gregory 1996) are setting up a plan of different actions within a certain timetable. This does not only mean to think about the best date for a public event, but also to have a schedule for publications. When has to be communicated which type of message and to which kind of audience? For example, a campaign on students does not have sense during the semester-break. As ECIs have only one year to collect signatures, this kind of planning might be especially important and has to be coordinated within the different member states, yet that times of holiday, elections, congresses etc. depend on each member state.

Another important factor is the budget of the organization. In contrast to a government or company, NGOs mainly do not have a regular income and are dependent on funding and contributions of its members. In case of ECIs, official data of the EU commission shows us, that most of the running initiatives do not have special financial support, only sometimes there are single contributions of about thousand euros, what can be considered as low funding, and only in one case 100.000 euros have been donated (Water is a human right) (cf. European Commission 2013)¹⁷. We will see this in more detail later in our discussion of several ECIs. Linked with the budget, also the equipment for communication has to be checked and organized. Will there be a special team for communication? Which investment will be made in communication costs?

¹⁷ ECI's only have to publish financial contributions of 100 Euros or more.

Finally, there has to be a revision of the results during the running communication process. The process can be seen as a cycle. With an analysis of the effects a certain communication strategy has or had, it can be improved. Perhaps, objectives, organization or timetable have to be changed. Evaluation has impact on further communication and may not be underestimated, although ECIs run only one year. Villafañe (1999: 221-242) adds, that the information has to be controlled after its dispersion. In case of wrong interpretations by other media or missing facts, there has to be offered and intensified complementary information.

Unfortunately, most NGOs do not have an elaborated communication strategy, very often planning lacks (cf. Pleil 2005: 9f.). Most things happen by chance: if there is a person within the organization team of an initiative, who has got experience in communication and PR, the strategy will be more professional than without any experiences or knowledge. Moreover, many organizations tend to underestimate the effects and importance of a coherent communication strategy and see it as some kind of by-product (cf. Pleil 2005: 10).

2.3.3 Communication at EU-level

Although ECIs provide the possibility for transnational communication, which can be a contribution to more democratic legitimation of the EU, this is not easy to manage. The media landscape within the EU is very diverse. When ECIs start to communicate their issue, they have to respect different media cultures. Hallin & Mancini (2004) tried to classify the different types of media systems in Western Europe, USA and Canada. They ascribe different types to certain groups of EU member states (see figure 5). Countries

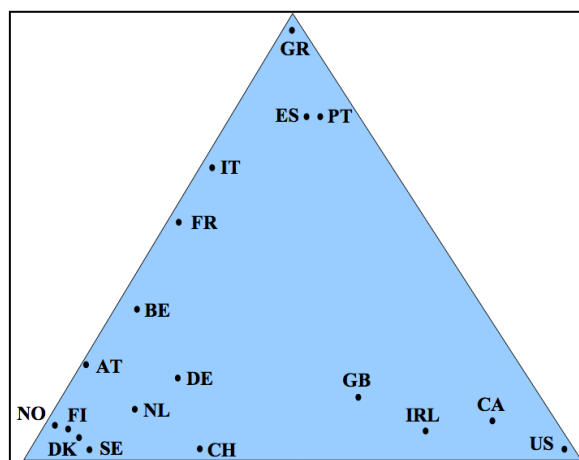


Figure 5: Relations of countries towards the three models of Hallin & Mancini (2004). Top: polarized-pluralist; left: democratic-corporatist; right: liberal.

like Greece, Spain or Portugal are assigned to the *Mediterranean or polarized-pluralistic model*, whose attributes are high political parallelism, commentary-oriented journalism, strong state intervention in the media, press subsidies like in France and Italy and (former) periods of censorship. Meanwhile, within the *North/Central Europe or Democratic Corporatist Model*, there is higher newspaper circulation, early development of mass-circulation press, external pluralism especially in national press, a shift toward neutral commercial press and strong state intervention but with protection for press freedom. This

second model is assigned to the Scandinavian EU member states, but also to Germany and Austria, for example. Finally, the *North Atlantic or Liberal Model* describes media systems with neutral commercial press, information-oriented journalism, internal pluralism, strong professionalization and domination by the market. Its pure form can be found in the USA and Canada, but also EU member states like Ireland and Great Britain can be ascribed to this type.

This classification of Hallin & Mancini (2004) already shows, how diversely communication has to be organized to fit best with the present media system. And we also have to take into consideration that these authors did not examine the media systems of all EU member states. In their more recent volume of 2011, the authors affirm that they don't want to universalize, yet that there are more facets of media systems. For example post-soviet influences especially affect the newer EU member states and possibly creates a fourth classification model (cf. Hallin/Mancini 2011). But this kind of dispersion is not the only problem with communicating at EU-level.

2.3.3.1 Identification problem

ECIs might also suffer because of the same problems the EU has with communicating its issues. As we saw, one of the claims about the democratic deficit in the EU is that the citizens cannot identify with the system and are quite uninterested in EU policies. Probably, ECIs also note this problem when they try to communicate. Their endeavour is quite new in Europe, most citizens do not know that ECIs exist. Furthermore, there are some member states that have no tradition of such citizen participation possibilities.

A logical consequence is that the institutions of the EU also should work in the way to make the instrument of ECIs more public. And members of the Commission affirm that they do so: "We certainly can and will do all we can to raise awareness of ECIs in general" (Šefčovič 2013). For example, Vivianne Reding in her citizens' dialogues emphasises a lot on ECIs and members of the Commission support her in all member states (cf. Tarradellas: Interview 02.05.13). Nevertheless, Tarradellas points out an important point in communicating at EU level: The identification of sender and recipient of a message.

If we return to the basic communication model of Shannon & Weaver (1963), we figure out that there is a communicator or sender of a message, and a receiver. First, it is important to know that they have to identify each other, which can be a problem at EU level. What or who is "the EU"? Closely related with the claim about the democratic deficit, it may be difficult for European citizens to understand who is communicating at EU level. There is no single

person that can be identified, no single institution. But at the same time, it is vice versa. Who and how is “the European citizen”, the receiver of the message? European citizens are such a diverse public that one message hardly can reach all of them. Moreover, we have to consider that the message always is encoded in a certain way by the sender and has to be decoded by the receivers. During this process, interruptions and problems can occur. A message has to be encoded in different ways for citizens of different member states, or even regions, because they are used to decode it in a different way. One source of irritation can be the adoption of the particular media system, as described above, for example. Another, and at EU level very important source of irritation is the language problem.

2.3.3.2 Language problem

As the European Citizen Action Service (ECAS) detected in a seminar, communication of ECIs is “strongly influenced by the issue of languages” (ECAS 2013: 1). Hence, it is nothing new, that communication in 23 official EU-languages is difficult, but we have to consider that behind an ECI, there are normally only a few citizens who don’t have the professional translating skills that are necessary for communicating in diverse languages. Already there is a latent claim of the organizers of ECIs towards the EU Commission that they expect better support in this field. Language problems harm communication and we may see within the discussion below, how strong it affects the different ECIs.

We may concern “language signifying a particular cultural meaning, certain unstated assumptions, that colour how we think and act” (Curtin/Gaither 2007: 36). Throughout the *circuit of culture model* in five moments, Curtin & Gaither (2007: 27ff) explain, how language and culture matter in every step of organizational communication. The moment of regulation compromises controls on cultural activity, ranging from formal and legal controls and defines what is correct in each country. As a related example we may think about the case of Catalonia, where Catalan is an official language in the universities, but in the rest of Spain it is not. If an ECI plans an event with students, it has to consider that. Furthermore, there are the moments of production and representation, which define the already described encoding process for producing and transmitting a certain message that can be distinct depending on each country. At the moment of consumption, messages have to be decoded by different audiences, which all bring their own semantic networks of meaning to any communicative exchange. For example, by simply translating a saying into another language, we can assume that the meaning will be different or other words have to be used to express the same thing.

Finally, the authors include the moment of identities in the cycle, because the identity or image of an organization can vary depending on various target audiences.

An important finding out of this model is that language problems can occur in every step of communication, and yet these moments are all interdependent, failure in one of them can have serious implications on further steps of communication.

2.3.4 Communication canals

By transmitting a message, organizations have the possibility to use different communication canals. But they always have to consider that every communication canal has its peculiar possibilities and advantages. So, the use of a certain communication canal depends on the former defined communication strategy. Villafañe (1999: 221-299) for example shows, that different objectives like financial, presidential, crisis or network building communication all call for different canals. Once we have defined the objective of communication, we can search for the adequate canal. At the same time, five factors have to be considered, following Gregory (1996: 120): Format, tone, context, timing and repetition have to go hand in hand with the smart use of different communication canals. The next chapters may provide the reader a short overview of possible canals and its characteristics related to articulation of ECIs.

2.3.4.1 Personal communication

Personal communication is the most original kind of transmitting a message. The face-to-face-work NGOs carry out may not be underestimated. But even in this simple canal, former mentioned problems might occur, especially in language. And of course, in this way there cannot be reached that many persons simultaneously. Nevertheless, personal presence is important for NGOs in gaining credibility (cf. Schicha 2001). Usually, organizations use events to establish direct contact with interested people. These events in case of ECIs are supposed to be very diverse, depending on the issue of each initiative. They can last from distributing flyers in popular places, to organizing speeches and conferences in universities, firms or within other organizations, and up to creating proper events. When we think about events that for example are organized by NGOs like Greenpeace, we can imagine that it attracts a lot of people and attention (cf. *ibid.*).

Through other canals, personal communication nowadays is also possible in different ways. For example, there can be post mailings, which are personalized or at least only distributed to a certain circle of persons. Of course, this is also the case for newsletters, which are sent via

e-mail. Normally, the degree of personalization is not very high, but investigation of Weberling (2012: 114) shows us, that the response in case of more specified newsletters depending on receiving groups is more successful. She specifies on the case of fundraising, but collecting money cannot be considered that far away from collecting funds. As fundraising is even harder, personalized mailings (via post or e-mail) could be an interesting option for ECIs. A closely related idea is the one of setting up chain letters. These are indirectly personal, because information is distributed to new distributors and everyone may select peer groups that are considered as possibly interested. Today, this kind of chaining also can be set up via SMS. And finally, related with this, also personal telephone calls are an opportunity.

But all the latter mentioned personal communication via post, e-mail or telephone requires personal information about the receivers. Data protection is considered very important at the time of collection of signatures. Because of that, the Commission until now did not allow ECIs to use this kind of data and so, organizers have no ex-ante possibility to stay in contact or dialogue with their supporters (see also this document, 2.2.2.2). So, ECIs are dependent on voluntary information ceded by persons who supply to a newsletter or on networks that have already been built before.

2.3.4.2 Media Relations

Press, TV, radio and Internet have developed influential media institutions and it can be an objective of communication strategies of ECIs to be represented there. Mass media institutions are stakeholders who might serve as multipliers of ECI's essences and because of that, ECIs will try to catch their attention. Using Inkpen work (2001), we consider that organizations must do two important strategies when they establish relations with their stakeholders: buffering relations to prevent crisis; and bridging relations to create good relations among them. Media relations of NGOs and ECIs are based on the second model. NGOs enter a collaboration with a partner to advance its managerial skills, among others (cf. Graf/Rothlauf 2011). In case of relations with media stakeholders, the aim is to reach more audience and credibility, whereas media institution might be interested in getting exclusive information first.

This kind of media relations can be created in different ways. Normally, it is managed by creating events of NGOs (cf. Schicha 2001). This is a form of indirect representation in the media – by creating an event (even if it is only a press conference) and inviting media institutions, a topic of the ECI can be turned into news. Here, the bigger the event, the bigger

is the advantage of it. By creating a media event, the news values have to be considered (like proximity, actuality, big names, oddity, conflicts...). As mentioned before, different media systems in Europe have to be held in mind while these considerations.

Another way to be present in the media and create a “face” of the initiative is to serve as experts (cf. Pleil 2005: 13). Obviously, organizers of an ECI are experts on different topics and can be interviewed in the context of other news. First, they are experts in their own field of the ECI, having elaborated it in the course of time and presented it well prepared to the EU commission. On the other hand, they also are experts about this new instrument (the ECI itself) and can be interviewed in the context of EU instruments, year of the citizens’, democratic deficit and so on. Of course, this occurs under the precondition of having members of the ECI that do not refuse talking in front of a camera or a microphone. And it is important to have local members to enter different media systems of the EU.

Related with the two former ideas, ECIs finally can build direct media relations and try to enter the programmes via special reports about their endeavour. This is the most difficult way, but one of the most integrated. After having seen or heard a report about an ECI, the audience is informed most completely and exclusively about its objectives, without appearing solely in the context of other topics. To gain this opportunity, there has to be a special interest of the media in the ECI. Probably, at the time of setting up an initiative or having already reached one million signatures, this kind of coverage is most possible.

2.3.4.3 Communication 2.0

The Internet combines two indispensable characteristics that are most important for ECIs: It is cheap and efficient. Many tools are related with this canal, and we may call the ensemble “Communication 2.0”. All recent publications of authors about non-profit-PR assign a central role to the Internet (e.g. Celaya 2009; Taylor et al. 2001; Curtis et al. 2010). Media use is changing at the side of the audience that every time is more used to search information in Internet and organizations have to adapt that for benefits (cf. Celaya 2009: 91). Website, Social Media, video and audio channels contain great opportunities for ECIs and we will outline them in the following paragraphs.

With the Internet, the already mentioned feedback-option in the process of communication is strengthened and allows organizations to set up a two-way communication model, even with possibilities for members of the audience to communicate with each other. Former investigation has shown, that unfortunately this opportunity until now is not implemented

successfully, but a trend towards it can be observed (cf. Taylor et al. 2001: 277 and Kang/Norton 2004: 282). Another advantage is that the Internet is non-mediated, which makes it very attractive for NGOs and empowers the activist in a new way (cf. Zoch et al. 2008: 351). Organizations can publish their own news and content and are no longer dependent on relations with other mass media institutions. Furthermore, they can offer information in one single place but in various languages, which in case of ECIs is very useful. Also in the field of personal communication the Internet may help by offering newsletters, RSS or comment functions.

The design of the organization's website is essential. It is the central point of communication 2.0 and may establish links to further tools like social media. At designing the webpage, it is important, that everything looks authentic. Furthermore, the ECI has to consider that most of traffic will be of users who search for information during their leisure time and therefore they have to catch them kind of emotionally (cf. Pleil 2005: 16). Depending on the corporate communication and planning strategy, the organization has to decide which type of webpage is most suitable (cf. Celaya 2009: 92). With a *Corporate Management System (CMS)*, several authors can collaborate in design and content; *Blogs* are more likely centered on showing the development of the undertaking in the course of time; A *wiki* may serve to collect information in a more scientific way. But independent of its form, it is very important that the webpage is updated frequently, has defined its keywords and does some kind of search engine optimization (SEO) to be found and to establish links from and to other related websites (cf. Celaya 2009: 99ff). In case of the ECIs we have to add that the possibility to sign on the website obviously is important and that has to be situated in a very eye-catching place. At the same time that there are a lot of things to consider, this is the big advantage of the proper webpage: Here the audience can sign directly.

Other tools that are common and helpful in the Web, are social media, video and audio channels. A study of Curtis et al. (2010) shows, that nearly all non-profit organizations use some form of social media, which is considered as a "beneficial method of communication". Nowadays, there is a huge amount of different social networks, functions and focuses, also dependent on the respective country, as well. Here we only want to consider the most popular international social networks, named Facebook and Twitter.

Facebook currently counts with 1.11 billion monthly active users worldwide and the number keeps growing (cf. Facebook.com 2013). Many organizations use this canal to communicate with their audience, called "fans". The network gives the opportunity to present information

directly to interested users, who then can comment or share the content on their personal wall. An advantage is that the number of people who have been reached by each post can be tracked frequently. An investigation of Waters et al. (2009) examined that the relationship, especially with stakeholders, improves a lot with using Facebook, but only if the profile is planned carefully and updated regularly.

The second big network is Twitter, counting with 200 million active users and 400 million tweets a day (cf. Twitter.com 3013). On Twitter, organizations can execute “nanoblogging” or “microblogging”, consisting in sending cost-free messages with a maximum of 140 characters (cf. Celaya 2009: 96). There can be built a public network with followers and the number of followers is easily overviewed. Feedback and interacting possibilities exist, but are not used that frequently. As a study of Lovejoy et al. (2012) examines, Twitter is mainly used in a one-way direction. Less than 20% of total tweets of non-profit organizations demonstrate conversations and roughly 16% establish indirect connections to specific users.

Big online video channels are for example YouTube or Vimeo. These offer a mainly cost-free opportunity to share videos with followers and the general audience. Furthermore, videos can be uploaded on these platforms and later be embedded in the own website to illustrate certain information. Audio channels like Soundcloud propose the same possibilities in case of audio files. Another online audio tool is podcasting, which means presenting news in form of continuously uploaded and distributed audio files.

This only is a short introduction in the diverse set of communication tools and canals on the Internet. In the following discussion of communication strategies of ECIs we will examine, which of them are used by these initiatives and why. Connections within the different types of communication (personal, media relations, communication 2.0) also are important and will be considered in the following.

3. Discussion

In accordance with the methodology described in chapter 1.2 of this work, the theoretical findings now shall be discussed with six selected real cases. After a short introduction by dint of empirical data about these six ECIs and their progress until to date, the results of the guided interviews shall be incorporated. Four of the six interviews have been realized via Skype, two provided the answers via e-mail.¹⁸ As the interviews were semi-structured, the interviewed

¹⁸ You find all transcripts in the appendix.

persons had the possibility to focus on their very proper issues and concerns. Although all fields of investigation have been mentioned in every interview, naturally the outcome is quite diverse. But we can see some interesting tendencies that will be discussed in the next paragraphs.

3.1 Empirical data of selected cases

Figure 6 shows some facts and data about the six selected ECIs in order of their timing. One of the first registered ECIs was “**Fraternité 2020 - Mobility. Progress. Europe.**” (= Fraternité 2020). This initiative fights for more attractive exchange programmes and cross-cultural understanding: “Our goal is to enhance EU exchange programmes – such as Erasmus or the European Voluntary Service (EVS) – in order to contribute to a united Europe based on solidarity among citizens.” (Fraternite2020.eu 2013) The organizers of Fraternité 2020 mainly are students with some associated partners such as *Government to You* or the *Fondation Hippocrène*. These associated organizations also support the ECI financially and current reported funding is about 7.000 Euros. On their homepage, the organizers describe that they also paid some part of the funding out of their own pockets and that they are searching for further sponsors. At the moment, 63.823 signatures have been collected and the initiative has time to keep on collecting until November 1, 2013. The interview with a member of Fraternité 2020 only has been provided under the condition of anonymity.¹⁹

Only one day later, “**Water and sanitation are a human right!**” (= Water is a human right) has been registered. This ECI is the only one that has reached over one million signatures within currently 8 member states of the EU yet. Its main objective is drafted: “Water is a public good, not a commodity. We invite the European Commission to propose legislation implementing the human right to water and sanitation [...] and promoting the provision of water and sanitation as essential public services for all.” (Right2water.eu 2013) Water is a human right’s main organizer and sponsor is the European Federation of Public Service Union (EPSU), supplemented by other trade, water and sanitation unions. Therefore, this initiative counts with most reported funding respect to the other five investigated cases: EPSU offered 100.000 Euros right from the beginning and contributed 30.000 Euros more in 2013. Although they may officially keep on collecting until November, the organizers decided to finish on September 8, 2013. The interview about this ECI has been realized with Pablo Sánchez Centellas.²⁰

¹⁹ See appendix 6.2.2.

²⁰ See appendix 6.2.3.

ECI (interviewed member)	Timing	Signing progress	Reported funding	Collecting mode	Website (last post)	Languages	Facebook name, fans, last post	Twitter name, followers, posts, last post	Other Social Media	Video channels (name, number, last post)	Podcast	News- letter/ RSS	Other
Fraternité 2020 - Mobility. Progress. Europe. (anonymous)	09/05/12 - 01/11/13	63.823	7.000 €	online	http://www.fraternite2020.eu/ (27/07/12)	Website: all 23+HR; Proposal: all 23	Fraternité 2020, 12.551, 27/05/13	fraternite_2020, 1.094, 881, 27/05/13	no	YouTube (Fraternité 2020, 37, 06/04/13)	no	no	chain e-mail
Water and sanitation are a human right! (Pablo Sánchez)	10/05/2012 - 01/11/13	1.437.832	130.000 €	online & paper	http://www.right2water.eu/ (28/05/13)	Website: EN, DE, FR, ES, IT, GR, NL, CS, RO, DA, FI; Proposal: all 23	right2water, 7.441, 26/05/13	right2water, 1.488, 2.084, 28/05/13	no	YouTube (PublicServicesEuro, 6, 28/11/12)	no	yes	
High Quality European Education for All (Ana Gorey)	16/07/12 - 01/11/13	data not available	15.000 €	online	http://www.euroedtrust.eu/ (20/05/13)	Website: EN, DE, FR, ES, IT, DA, GR, HU, SL, CAT; Proposal: all 23	MEET, 5.699, 28/05/13	EuroMEET, 5.992, 295, 28/05/13	no	no	no	yes	
Pour une gestion responsable des déchets, contre les incinérateurs (Gael Drillon)	16/07/12 - 01/11/13	data not available	0 €	paper	http://ice.id.st (data not available)	Website: FR; Proposal: FR	Pour gestion responsable des déchets, contre incinérateurs, 18, 27/05/13	DRILLONG, 7, 43, 27/05/13	no	no	no	no	
Single Communication Tariff Act (Jorn Moeskops)	03/12/12 - 03/12/13	data not available	2.000 €	online	http://www.onesingletariff.com/ (08/01/13)	Website: EN, DE, FR, ES; Proposal: all 23	One Single Tariff, 843, 27/05/13	onesingletariff, 614, 680, 26/05/13	Flickr (One Single Tariff, 15 photos, last post: 12/12/12)	YouTube (OneSingle Tariff, 4, 30/03/12)	Sound- cloud (3 posts, last post: 11/12/12)	no	Skype account
Unconditional Basic Income (Klaus Sambor)	14/01/13 - 14/01/14	42.438	1.500 €	online & paper	http://basicincome2013.eu/ (26/05/13)	Website: EN, DE, FR, ES, IT, DA, GR, HU, SL, NL, CS, RO, FI, LU, PL, PT, SK, SV; Proposal: EN, DE, FR, ES, IT, DA, HU, SL, NL, CS, RO, FI, PT, SK, SV, BG	Initiative for a Basic Income in Europe, 6.445, 27/05/13	basicincomeEU, 1.672, 927, 28/05/13	Google+ (109 members ; last post: 28/05/13)	YouTube (BasicIncomeEurope, 10, 07/04/13)	no	yes	QR- Code, Social TV

Figure 6: Empirical data about the six case-study-ECIs. All numbers have been taken by May 28, 2013. If there were more than one Facebook page or Twitter account, this table only shows the main or official page/account. All data taken from the ECI's or EU Commission's website and slightly extended with information from the qualitative interviews.

The next two ECIs have been registered in July of 2012 and will finish collecting signatures in November 2013. **“High Quality European Education for All”** (= HQ European Education) aims to create a debate about European education. It “calls for the creation of an Education platform to stimulate debate on how to improve schools and boost the European dimension of education in line with the EU’s 2020 strategy” (Euroedtrust.eu 2013). This ECI has been submitted by “MEET, the Movement towards a European Education Trust”, a group of ordinary citizens, and is supported financially by some school, education and university organizations like the European Parents’ Association (EPA) or the University Women of Europe (UWE). All together, the ECI counts with 15.000 Euros. During the interview with organizer Ana Gorey, she explained that the signing progress is not the principal objective. They simply want to set up the debate. Therefore, numbers of signatures are not provided.²¹

“Pour une gestion responsable des déchets, contre les incinérateurs” (= Gestion responsable des déchets) is working with the same timing. Main objectives of this initiative are to reduce waste and increase recycling of packages (cf. Ice.id.st 2013). This ECI has been set up by seven ordinary citizens without any organizational or financial support of other organizations until now. As by date of the investigation the online collecting system of this ECI did not work, a number of collected signatures cannot be provided. The interview has been realized with organizer Gael Drillon.²²

The objective of the ECI **“Single Communication Tariff Act”** is to end up with roaming fees around Europe and complete the European common market for all mobile phone customers (cf. Onesingletariff.com 2013). The organizers are students and professionals that do not count with support of other organizations. 2.000 Euros reported funding come from a politician and manager called Yannick Naud. An official number of collected signatures could not be found and was not provided by Jorn Moeskops, who answered to the questions of this investigation via e-mail.²³

Finally, the sixth investigated case of ECIs is **“Unconditional Basic Income”**. As the name indicates, the long-term objective of this initiative is the introduction of an unconditional basic income (UBI) in Europe. As a short-time objective, the initiative calls for a detailed proving of the possibility for an UBI by the EU institutions (cf. Basicincomeinitiative.eu 2013). The initiative is organized by ordinary citizens and counted in the beginning with 1.500 Euros of financial support by donations. During the interview with organizer Klaus

²¹ See appendix 6.2.4.

²² See appendix 6.2.5.

²³ See appendix 6.2.6.

Sambor, he explained, that currently the initiative tries to gain money by selling t-shirts and is thinking about setting up a constant donation banking account.²⁴ Until to date, the Unconditional Basic Income initiative has collected 42.438 signatures.

3.2 Organization of communication

All interviewed organizers of the ECIs confirm that communication is important to move forward with their initiative. “It obviously has to be done”, says Ana Gorey, although she considers that the term *communication strategy* is “bizarre”, because ordinary citizens would not call it that way. Pablo Sánchez adds that any kind of news about the ECI in the media are important, there cannot be bad news and “tienes que ir a todo”²⁵. In fact, only one initiative has a concrete plan of communication (Water is a human right), but some other are quite near and are doing steps towards a corporate communication. This already can be seen in the form of how communication is organized.

Except the case of Gestion responsable des déchets, where Gael Drillon is responsible for everything, including communication, every ECI has a special team or person for communication issues. Water is a human right even counts with Pablo Sánchez, who works full time employed by EPSU as public relations manager for the ECI and has a special budget dedicated to communication. In case of communication in other languages, another half-time employed person and several national managers in the member states support him. Other initiatives have lower levels of organization. At Unconditional Basic Income and HQ European Education, there are special teams dedicated to communication, also supported by national managers. All work voluntarily, have no special budget for communication and are divided into more specialized groups. For example, within the ECI of Unconditional Basic Income, five persons work in the field of the international website, one of them only in terms of security and data protection issues. Another person currently works in creating a list of media institutions that can be contacted EU-wide. At HQ European Education, the communication team counts with two persons for Internet and social media issues and two more in coordination and press releases. At Fraternité 2020, there are some dedicated people to take care about the social media channels and a part of the budget is especially addressed to communication. Jorn Moeskops is administrator of One Single Tariff Act and enjoys “strong autonomy” in communication issues.

²⁴ See appendix 6.2.7.

²⁵ “you have to try everything”

Furthermore, all investigated cases add that they have national teams to plan and coordinate events in the member states. These teams count with autonomy in communicating these events, as well as in connecting with the media.

3.3 Audience

As we showed in the theoretical part of this work, one of the steps in planning communication, apart from organizing staff and defining objectives, is defining the audience. This can lead to a more corporate communication. Apart from one initiative, also in this field the investigated ECIs show tendencies to have adjusted their communication to their audience. Gael Drillon is the only person who told during the interview that he tries to “create audience” at the moment, but without having defined it.

In contrast, the interviewed of the other ECIs generally say that they are open towards all kind of audience, but have special focuses depending on the issue of their initiative. Pablo Sánchez from Water is a human right tells that the first step in communication was to reach other people associated in organizations of water and sanitation, important until to date. Only after that, they amplified the audience. There were special considerations for regions, where the right for water entered the public agenda via debates in the parliament, like in Berlin, Andalusia or Italy. Similar was procedure in HQ for European Education. After trying to reach associated people of education organizations, now the audience is in the field of parents, teachers and educators. Ana Gorey says that there is a special focus on children with special needs, but that the focus may depend on each member state. And she adds: “civil society in general, because [...] we hope that people who are interested in democratic participation would also be interested in participating in a ECI. So, everything with the European affairs, harmonization of education, [...] European values, European identity.” This point is interesting, yet that it indicates in the direction of diminishing the democratic deficit of the EU within the ECI.

Also Klaus Sambor from Unconditional Basic Income says that they want to reach people who call for more direct participation in the EU and who really want to change something, because the essence of this initiative already is “gegen das System”²⁶. Furthermore, this ECI tries to reach unemployed people, because they would have most profit of the UBI. By distributing flyers and information about their ECI in front of employment centres, they try to come closer to them.

²⁶ “anti-systemic”

The ECIs about One Single Tariff Act and Fraternité 2020 are more orientated on students, “as most of us are students ourselves” like the member of Fraternité 2020 explains. The topics of these initiatives are related to young people who for example are the ones to profit from Erasmus programmes. Jorn Moeskops adds, that the single tariff act also is interesting for international business people and people on holidays “as they have most to gain from our initiative”.

3.4 Development of communication strategy and tools

There can be found much diversity in the development of communication strategies of the different ECIs. Depending on the bases described before, each ECI marks a different way and focuses on different canals and tools. What all investigated cases have in common is that they see the Internet as most important, they all had a website right from the beginning and use Facebook and Twitter and try to reach attention from other media by organizing events. Moreover, all interviewed mentioned that anytime personal dialogue is of big importance.

3.4.1 Use of communication tools

An interesting strategy of Water is a human right and HQ European Education in the beginning was to send e-mails to all already associated people in their organizations and unions. In case of the water initiative, this means 8 Million people all over Europe, who at the same time were asked to forward this e-mail to further persons, creating a form of chain e-mail. Pablo Sánchez also is the only interviewed who mentions that the newsletter is an effective communication tool, because it reaches 15.000 persons in the case of this initiative. The newsletter also is kind of personalized, because subscribers are divided in different interest groups. Some other initiatives also use this tool, but it is not considered as important and not personalized. Another kind of e-mailing and sending post letters does the UBI initiative. They send real personalized information to people, whose addresses have been collected before.

But the most important communication tool is the website, which we could already expect from former findings of investigations. Organizers of ECIs appreciate the possibility to communicate via the website in different languages and without mediation or high costs. With exception of Gestion responsable des déchets, all websites incorporate the possibility to sign the initiative, which is marked in a special way.²⁷ These five websites furthermore all include a description of the ECI as instrument in general and of the issues of the very proper one in

²⁷ See screenshots in the appendix 6.3.

concrete and links to Facebook, Twitter or other online communication canals and tools. Klaus Sambor mentions that it is an advantage to be able to use the servers of the EU commission for the webpage and save costs. Jorn Moeskops emphasises on the possibility “to attract people to contact us and support our initiative (both materially and through their personal efforts)”. As a disadvantage the member of Fraternité 2020 mentions that their homepage cannot be well displayed on mobile devices. Other interviewed did not mention this problem, either because they are not aware about it or because they do not consider it as a problem.

Further development of communication strategies leads in all cases to the use of social media. We can see that Facebook is the very preferred canal to communicate with followers of the ECI. Fraternité 2020 even spent most of the budget of the initiative on promoting on Facebook, and counts by far with most fans compared to the other ECIs. “If we could spend 10.000 EUR on FB that would probably suffice to take us over 100.000 signatures, which is an important psychological barrier”, says the member of this initiative. He, Pablo Sánchez, Ana Gorey and Jorn Moeskops also insist on the advantage of Facebook to create real conversations and dialogues about the issue of the ECI. This clearly leads to a form of two-way-symmetric communication model through the use of Facebook. Jorn Moeskops adds that Facebook provides the possibility to evaluate the efficiency of the communication strategy, because there can be seen, how many people are reached by a post and how they react. All six interviewed use Facebook to keep their followers updated about the progress of the ECI and to announce events. Gael Drillon says that the fact that Facebook is a cost-free tool is important. With the exception of Gestion responsable des déchets, every initiative counts with Facebook pages in different languages and managed by various persons of the initiative. In case of the water initiative there even have been created Facebook events by people from outside. Because of special occasions in their region, these people created events to sign the initiative and Pablo Sánchez says that this has been very effective and some pages even caught more followers than the official page. Ana Gorey explains, that in case of the HQ European Education there are Facebook pages in all languages, but with diverse success, depending on the publicity the issue has in the different member states. None of the interviewed talked negatively about the communication tools Website and Facebook.

In contrast, Pablo Sánchez calls Twitter as a tool “contra-productivo si tienes que firmar algo”²⁸, because it has a very instantaneous character, whereas the ECI is an instrument that

²⁸ “contra-productive if you have to sign something”

runs one whole year. Only in special actual cases like when the president of Nestlé said something about the water issue, this meant real news, which could be transmitted effectively via Twitter. All investigated ECIs use Twitter, but in no interview it has been mentioned as important. It seems that it is some kind of obligatory to have it, but in fact it does not bring many benefits. Ana Gorey explains that in HQ European Education the Twitter account is linked with the Facebook page and everything published appears on both canals. Twitter only is kind of a by-product. Gael Drillon until now has not created a Twitter account for his initiative, but uses his personal account exclusively to communicate news about Gestion responsable des déchets.

Other social media is also used by some initiatives (see figure 6), but considered less important and updated very unregularly, this means for example Google+ and Flickr. In case of YouTube we can observe the same scenario. It is used by four of the six initiatives, but merely updated and better used supplementary than to create a forum of discussion. A more dialogue-orientated form of video content is the online social TV of the UBI initiative. Klaus Sambor describes that they sometimes realize online video discussions, where interested people can directly join the conversation. These broadcasts also are recorded and can be viewed on YouTube later. Another idea of this initiative is a QR-Code on the website that leads to the signing page. Only the One Single Tariff Act initiative uses a podcast service, but neither continuous. This initiative also has a Skype account, which is another idea to interact directly with interested people.

3.4.2 Media relations and events

Media relations are considered as important. All investigated ECI try to reach the attention of media or other stakeholders by organizing events. Two of the interviewed also mentioned that the fact of having an ECI facilitates communication. In case of Fraternité 2020 the advantage was being the very first ECI, which appeared as a content of several European news channels. Klaus Sambor from Unconditional Basic Income says, that the ECI is considered somewhat more important when trying to organize events. Having an initiative at European level convinces the people more to believe that it has to be supported.

Gael Drillon has not noticed that effect until to date. “Media don’t take attention about the project because I am just a citizen and I have no power”, he says. He is going to organize a big event in his city to make Gestion responsable des déchets more public and expects also participation of media there. After initial interest of the media, Fraternité 2020 had problems to set its initiative on the media’s agenda, too. They created a section of press releases on their

website, but “unfortunately, this is not working quite as well as we would like to”, tells a member. As a kind of event, Fraternité 2020 also organized conferences in the EP, counting with 70 supporting MEP’s. But “it did not bring us many new signatures as the EP is not very high on the media’s agenda.”

A more active behaviour towards the media has One Single Tariff Act. They not only organize events and wait for media’s interest, but also contact them actively. Apart from providing a press kit and press releases on their website, they contact different media target-orientated. Jorn Moeskops especially names radio channels and newspapers. Respectively newspapers, the ECI has a focus on those orientated towards students, international business and holiday-related organizations, yet that these publications are read by their target audience. The response is positive: “We can see a clear impact of an action in the media and the number of signatures we get.”

Similarly, Unconditional Basic Income tries actively to reach the media’s attention. Klaus Sambor is quite proud of having implemented several times the ECI into the newspapers. “Und dann hat das manchmal natürlich große Folgen, weil [...] die haben dann meist auch online den gleichen Artikel und dann gibt es da 1.000 Kommentare.”²⁹ The UBI initiative, compared with the other cases, generally is the one that focuses most on creating events to communicate their initiative directly and indirectly. They have created two kind of teams to organize and plan events: several national ones and one international. In the national groups, they plan events like let go balloons with attached information letters or to collect signatures in special places with stands and flyers. Within the international team, they for example organize participation in EU-wide demonstrations or conferences. Klaus Sambor is happy with the impact until to date: “Das ist dann natürlich motivierend, dass wenn da eine Veranstaltung gemacht wurde, dass dann am nächsten Tag viele zusätzlich mehr unterschreiben.”³⁰

The two ECIs with bigger organizations behind them did not try to reach the media actively, but have been contacted automatically. “They contact us if they want to write an article”, says Ana Gorey. HQ European Education already had some interviews in the press and radio, “but it is difficult to follow what they do with things or not”. Pablo Sánchez also has lost the overview, in his case, because there was very much interest of the media in the issue of the water ECI. As the right to water has entered the political agenda of several member states,

²⁹ “And this sometimes means big impact, because they publish the same article on their website and the result are kind of 1.000 comments.”

³⁰ “It is quite motivating that after having executed an event, the next day more people sign.”

there has been made the connection to the ECI very frequently, above all in Germany. There were and are many articles in newspapers and reports on the radio, but Pablo Sánchez says, that the best is to enter the television: “Si tienes acceso a la televisión [...] tienes un provecho. [...] Tres días de [...] show es como tres meses de trabajo interno.”³¹ He gave interviews in programmes of WDR and Arte, for example, and did not only serve as a member of the ECI, but also as an expert in the issue. But in comparison with the other investigated cases, the water initiative is the only one that could count with that much support of the media, inclusive television. The other did not reach this status.

When asking about the future, organizers of investigated ECIs also mainly talk about events they will set up. Noticeable, only Jorn Moeskops talks about a new communication tool for One Single Tariff Act, which will be doing an advertisement campaign in the relevant member states via Facebook. The others mainly think about ways how to catch stakeholders and media better, instead of developing their proper direct communication reforming its communication tools.

Water is a human right, which already passed the number of signatures will continue communicating as it does at the moment, but tries to reach even more signs in more member states to be secure about a big impact on the EU Commission. At HQ European Education and Unconditional Basic Income, they are planning campaigns and events with their target groups. Furthermore, the UBI initiative is planning to do a workshop for its members to have more people who can assume more responsibility within the ECI. Gael Drillon first wants to solve the problem that his initiative cannot be signed online yet and later wants to think about how to communicate this new possibility best via social media like Facebook and Twitter.

3.5 Problems

Especially noticeable is, that all along the interviews there have been mentioned many problems. We may figure out three big fields of problems, which are directly or indirectly related with communication: Language problems, financial problems and problems with the functioning of the ECI as a democratic instrument.

Closest related with communication of course is the language problem. All interviewed except of Jorn Moeskops mention this in the course of the interview. Language is both a problem in internal and external communication. All initiatives mainly communicate in

³¹ “If you have access to the television, this is an advantage. Three days of show are like three months of internal work.”

English, except *Gestion responsable des déchets*, which is held only in French. Gael Drillon has many problems, yet that he does not speak very well other languages and the other members of his committee have “lost motivation”. He tried to translate the proposal to other languages with the help of Google translate, but the Commission did not accept his texts. The other five initiatives organize this problem via national managers who take care for external communication in the respect language of the country. At Unconditional Basic Income they even have a special group of translators and they try to translate as much of the news as they can to other languages and publish them on the website or Facebook pages.

Money is another general problem that can be observed. Except the water initiative, which has a huge trade union behind, all interviewed say that more financial support would be of biggest interest. Especially Gael Drillon insists on this point: “I have no resorts, no budget. So I make it at home, in the night, after the work, with my old PC, and so it’s difficult because it needs a lot of energy and a lot of time.” Ana Gorey explains that without having enough money, it is difficult to calculate for future projects and also communication, because everything has to be decided within the given frame of money, which can vary. Nevertheless, three out of five initiatives dedicate special budget for communication needs.

Concerning the ECI as an instrument, there surge diverse problems that vary depending on the initiatives. Ana Gorey, Pablo Sánchez and Klaus Sambor mention problems with the timing of the initiative, which is also related with a possible communication plan. They insist that it is hard to reach continuous awareness about the issue during one year in 27 different member states. This is considered a big endeavour. “You need to have the angle that is relevant for these countries and it’s something that is very organic”, says Ana Gorey from HQ European Education. She and Pablo Sánchez also consider the summer holidays as a problem, which is a “dead month”. When only having one year, the holiday time summed up really are an obstacle to have continuous communication (in spite of having an ECI like the One Single Tariff Act that is orientated to people that are on holiday). But as three out of six interviewed mention the timing problem, this indicates into the direction, that there are kind of plans of communication. Pablo Sánchez adds that it costs much more to get the first signatures. “Por ejemplo en Finlandia [ha sido] un trabajo durísimo a ganar los primeros 9.000. Y una vez se pasó, la dinámica es que van a una velocidad doble de antes. Es un poco curioso, no? Sea, necesitas un millón de firmas para que la gente piense en firmar.”³² Expressed in another way,

³² “For example in Finland it has been a very hard work to reach the first 9.000 signatures. Once we passed, the progress was twice as fast as before. That’s a little bit strange, isn’t it? You need a million signatures to make the people think about signing.”

this means that the positive signing process in case of the water initiative also could have a spill over effect to the other ECIs. Moreover, Ana Gorey thinks, that the success of an ECI depends on the topic of the initiative: “Education is something that [...] everybody has an opinion on and it feels like a very strong debate. If you say ‘give me the right to vote’ everybody will understand that simple message.”

Apart from the timing problem, organizers also have to cope with difficulties at collecting signatures. Klaus Sambor, who is from Austria, tells that it is a “Hemmschwelle”³³ for people to give their ID number, which is required there when signing an initiative. “Wenn man auf der Straße steht mit dem Formular, haben die meisten gar keinen Pass mit. Und sind auch nicht bereit, die Passnummer dort öffentlich einzutragen.”³⁴ Because of that, his national team of the ECI tries to collect signatures at airports, for example, where everyone has to have his/her passport with him/her. Ana Gorey and Pablo Sánchez also insist on this problem. For example Water is a human right has lost many signatures in the beginning, because they had been provided wrong or doubled. Ana Gorey sees generally a problem in collecting signatures on paper, because there is the data protection problem. On the other side, she calls for the possibility to create a dialogue with the citizens who have signed the initiative – even in an anonymous way, with the help of special e-mail programmes, this would be possible. She says, that the EU Commission could help in this point. Gael Drillon also expected more help from the Commission. After nearly one year that his initiative is running, the online collection system on his website still doesn’t work. He is in dialogue with the Commission, but first had to read technical papers that he didn’t understand: “It is too difficult.” Jorn Moeskops and the member from Fraternité 2020 add, that they have difficulties to find people who support the initiative (materially and personally), yet that it needs a lot of time and engagement.

Finally, the interviewed expressed several concerns about the efficiency of the ECI as a democratic instrument. Jorn Moeskops from One Single Tariff Act explains, that it is hard to collect signatures, given the “limited publicity” of the instrument in Europe. Pablo Sánchez also realized this problem, especially because he got some e-mails from citizens who asked about the instrument and so the initiative had to answer questions that normally should be directed to the Commission: “La Comisión piensa que sí que la gente lo conoce porque la publicaron en un anexo y está escrito en el Tratado de Lisboa, pero no.”³⁵ He and Klaus

³³ “inhibition”

³⁴ “When you are there on the streets with the form, most people don’t have their passport with them. And they are not willing to write their ID down there, in a public sphere.”

³⁵ “The Commission thinks that the people have to know it because they published it in an appendix and it is written in the Lisbon Treaty, but it’s not like that.”

Sambor also mention the problem, that citizens don't see the ECI as an efficient binding mechanism and therefore are not willing to sign – it's not worth the effort. Pablo Sánchez calls this the “peor enemigo”³⁶ of the ECI. Klaus Sambor also says that convincing these people is very hard work, above all because the organizers themselves expected more from the new mechanism: “Wir wollten ja eigentlich nicht nur eine EBI, so eine Art Agenda Setting, wo dann die EU Kommission immer noch sagen kann ‘sehr schön, aber das interessiert uns alles gar nicht’. Sondern wir wollten ein EU-Referendum.”³⁷ As a contrast example, he tells about an initiative in Switzerland that also claims for an unconditional basic income. This initiative collected enough signatures in quite little time, because with the direct democracy, every signature makes more sense there, says Klaus Sambor. He hopes that there will be a kind of spill over effect to the EU, both for the concrete UBI-ECI and on the creation of more democratic instruments in general. Gael Drillon sums up: “I think it is the first level to go to European democracy, but it is not sufficient.”

4. Conclusions

Just with finishing this master's thesis, one ECI has achieved a first political success: Even before handing in the signatures to the European Commission, EU-Commissioner Barnier has announced that water will be excluded from the concessions directive – one of the prior objectives of the Water is a human right initiative. “It is our duty to take into account the concerns expressed by so many citizens” and “I hope this will reassure citizens that the commission listens”, Barnier said in his statement (cf. Barnier 2013). The organizers of the water's ECI have already announced that they will keep on collecting firms to achieve further goals, but celebrate the declaration as a “success for citizens” (cf. Right2water.eu 2013a). As we investigated before, the water initiative has the best-organized communication strategy, closely connected with having most budget, most working people and a topic, which is relatively easy to understand for citizens. Anyways, its success is a good sign for changing behaviour at European level and points into the right direction at bringing more democracy to the EU, above all in times when Euroscepticism is growing.

As the analysis of this thesis shows, there remains a democratic deficit in the EU. One of the basic problems is the lacking European *demos*, which is essential for a democratic system. Without having a common feeling of identity, democratic legitimation can hardly be

³⁶ “biggest enemy”

³⁷ “We didn't only want an ECI, which is a form of agenda setting, where the Commission in the end can say ‘very nice, but we are not interested in that’. We wanted an EU referendum.”

achieved. Furthermore, there are claims about a trend towards the executive powers, “undemocratic” EU Commission, weak European Parliament and lack of a real party system at EU-level. Nevertheless, quite a few mechanisms for civic participation at EU level have been established, among them the ECI.

Current literature cannot provide an ultimate answer to the question whether the ECI brings more democracy to the EU; neither does this master’s thesis. There are considerable advantages of the ECI, which is the first transnational instrument of participatory democracy in the world. It may help to reduce the gap between the EU institutions and citizens, because they get the chance to set their own topics. This can also have a positive effect on the next European elections in 2014, because parties may use these topics of European citizen’s interest in their campaigns. As every ECI has to be organized by at least seven citizens from different member states and a certain percentage of signatures has to be reached in at least seven member states, this instrument leads to transnational communication. The ECI might help to create EU-wide dialogues and discussions about several topics and this can help to create a European *demos*.

But collecting one million signatures within one year is a difficult endeavour. Water is a human right has managed it, but there is a huge trade union behind them. Our findings show that smaller ECIs have to cope with many problems they cannot solve alone and harm their work. They claim for more support of the Commission, regarding technical and organizational support in collection system and translations as well as making the ECI more public in general. The timing of one year is considered too short and the data requirement at collecting firms too high. Moreover, theoretical and practical analysis of the ECI instrument indicates that it is more likely an “agenda initiative”, yet that it is without binding obligation for the Commission to set up a legislative proposal. This might cause frustration on the side of the organizers who want to change something and in the end perhaps are not considered adequately.

Concerning communication, we have discovered that in fact it is essential for ECIs. The success of an ECI is directly related with its communication, because there has to be publicity at collecting signatures. Even if some of the investigated ECIs are not conscious about it, all of them have developed some kind of communication strategy, proceeding from the objectives each one wants to achieve. In general, we can see that there is a relation between budget and organizational level of communication, but it also depends on the very special persons that work within the initiative. In case of Water is a human right we clearly can speak

about an elaborated corporate communication, because there is a full employed PR-manager and a special budget for this issue – everything is quite professional. Apart from that, at High Quality European Education and Unconditional Basic Income, they are very dedicated on their voluntary endeavour and have developed their own communication strategies. Less organized are strategies of Fraternité 2020 and One Single Tariff Act, but also creative and target-orientated. Only one of the investigated cases (Gestion responsable des déchets) after nearly one year of running ECI did not show much planning progress – in this case solution of technical problems remains most important.

Five out of six cases have special persons or teams who work on communication and defined their audience well. This shows that they are aware of the importance of communicating. Furthermore, they count with so-called national managers, who organize discussions and events at member state level. Communicating at EU-level is especially difficult, because there are different media systems, identification and language problems. All interviewed organizers of ECIs mentioned that it is hard to communicate the initiative all along one year in 27 (from July 2013 on: 28) member states, including language and understanding problems. Only one of the initiatives has established an explicit group of translators to keep citizens all along Europe informed at the same level. The others are dependent of national managers or do not communicate in many languages – their communication is not that homogeneous.

Regarding the different communication canals, face-to-face communication at events and communication via Internet are the most popular. Only one initiative uses the newsletter to create personalized mailing and chain letters and one initiative sends private e-mails and post letters to interested persons. Others also use the newsletter function, but without personalization. To prove the impact of this kind of communication could be issue of further research.

All of them organize events to communicate with their audience and at the same time to reach the mass media's attention. Especially the UBI-Initiative is working on this field and is happy with the response in the media up to the present. Also the water and the education initiative have had impact on the media, and without contacting them actively. But these three are, as we see, the best organized. The lower organized ECIs claim for interest of the media in their topics. Only in case of Water is a human right members could enter the public debate as experts on the issue, which either is hard to manage or has not been practiced actively by the others until now. Also in this field, further quantitative analysis may show concrete data about the impact ECI's have on media stakeholders.

Concerning the Internet, the website and Facebook are most used communication tools. At the website, the organizers appreciate the possibility for direct, cost-free and multi-lingual communication. Although one ECI is still struggling with the collecting system, they are generally content with the websites' possibilities. Most interesting about Facebook is that it is the preferred canal for dialogue and four of the interrogated mentioned that they see it as a possibility to create real discussions about their issue. *Fraternité 2020* and *One Single Tariff Act* even would like to spend more money on Facebook campaigns to create audience there. This indicates in the direction of two-way-symmetric communication. Supplementary research could target to prove this kind of new symmetric communication model that surges with the use of Facebook, especially for NGOs and ECIs. Twitter in contrast is not seen as very important, because it is too instant if signatures have to be collected within a long period. Video and audio channels and other ideas in the Internet like a Skype account or Social TV are additional tools, but used only as by-products.

To sum up, we can say that the bigger the organizational level and creativity of communication within an ECI, the bigger its effects and the better the results. Hopefully, the first success of the waters' initiative will have a spill-over effect onto the other initiatives as well. It would be a good sign for more democracy at EU level, if more citizens knew about the ECI and participated there. As the instrument is still in its beginnings, we can assume that it will have greater effects in the future. At the moment, there is a lot of investigation on the mechanism what may help to improve it. All interviewed persons of this investigation also are aware of the democratic possibilities of the ECI and try to communicate it at the same time when communicating their proper issue.

Actually, the need of communication may not be underestimated. As we could see in this master's thesis, it is essential for establishing the democratic mechanism of the ECI. Although Ana Gorey said in the interview, that an ordinary citizen would not think about a real communication strategy for its initiative, we affirm that it is important for a successful endeavour. Spending human and material resources on communication is the best way to create participation and a more democratic EU.

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6. Appendix

6.1 Expert Interview

6.1.1 Structure

Communication at European level

Todavía ninguna de las iniciativas ciudadanas europeas ha alcanzado el número obligatorio para que la Comisión Europea tenga que considerar una iniciativa legislativa. Por qué? Es demasiado difícil? Qué problemas ve?

Qué hace la Comisión/el Parlamento para comunicar las Iniciativas Ciudadanas Europeas? Qué dificultades hay respecto a comunicar algo a nivel europeo, aparte de las diferentes lenguas?

Democratic deficit

Si alguna iniciativa alcanzaría el número de firmas obligatorio, la Comisión tiene que considerar el caso, pero no tiene que lanzar una iniciativa legislativa. Puede ser bastante decepcionante. No le falta eficaz al instrumento de la Iniciativa?

La Comisión está bajo de cierto tipo de presión de convertir algún caso en iniciativa legislativa para defender al instrumento de la ICE como instrumento democrático eficaz?

Considerado esto, diría Ud. que la ICE ayuda a disminuir el déficit democrático en la UE?

6.1.2 Transcript Ferran Tarradellas Espuny

Face-to-face interview on May 2, 2013

Christine Memminger: Hasta ahora ninguna Iniciativa Ciudadana ha alcanzado el numero obligatorio...

Ferran Taradellas Espuny: El agua sí...

Sí, pero todavía no tiene el numero de firmas de los ciudadanos de diferentes países. Se necesitan 7 y ahora ha alcanzado el numero en 5. Qué son razones por las que todavía no ha alcanzado este numero? Qué pueden ser razones en general y en la comunicación en concreto?

Bueno, las razones... es imposible para mi saberlo porque se tiene que preocupar la gente que presenta la iniciativa. Es muy difícil saber porque. Todo lo que puedo imaginarme... no es fácil de conseguir un millón de firmas, a pesar de que hay un útil informático que se ha

diseñado a facilitar esta recogida de firmas. Por otro lado, hay muchas cosas que preocupan muchos ciudadanos pero que no son competencia de la Unión Europea. Entonces, esto limita mucho el ámbito en el que se pueden hacer iniciativas ciudadanas. Hay mucha gente que intenta lanzar Iniciativas Ciudadanas pero no han llegado a ningún sitio porque no han sido poder admitidas como propuestas porque no eran competencia comunitaria, no? Entonces, en las zonas en las que sí que son competencias comunitarias, es una cosa muy nueva. No se había hecho antes nunca, entonces, pues, la gente quizás no tiene la costumbre de acudir a esta iniciativa. Pero por qué no se ha conseguido antes es muy difícil de saber. Yo creo que tiene que ver con esto. Con la novedad del tema y con el desconocimiento que hay un poco que son las competencias comunitarias.

Y si pensamos en la comunicación, hay dos partes de comunicar las iniciativas ciudadanas. Por las iniciativas, pero también la Comisión podría comunicar este nuevo instrumento. Y qué medidas toma la Comisión para hacer el instrumento en sí más conocido?

Bueno, cuando se hizo todo el debate sobre el tratado de Lisboa, esta es uno de los puntos que se puso encima de la mesa. Como es una novedad del tratado de Lisboa que democratiza mucho más la Unión Europea. Por primera vez, los ciudadanos tienen el derecho de iniciativa que es nuevo. Luego se han organizado muchos eventos presentando la iniciativa ciudadana. Yo antes trabajaba en Madrid en el departamento de prensa e hicimos un gran evento sobre la iniciativa ciudadana y dentro de poco, esto te puedo enseñar como noticia,

(se levanta, coge unos carteles de su escritorio y los enseña al interrogador)

... estamos organizando diálogos con los ciudadanos de la Unión Europea, la vicepresidenta Reding está organizando muchos de estos, nosotros lo que hemos hecho ha sido organizar una exposición con unos imágenes, un poco con los dichos de los ciudadanos europeos. Uno de los pósters era éste

(lo enseña al interrogador)

Sea, el derecho a la iniciativa legislativa. Luego, por otro lado, en la comunicación de los derechos en la Unión Europea, siempre se ha puesto mucho acento en éste en concreto. Porque siempre... tú también vas a hablar del déficit democrático, verdad?

Sí.

En cambio, por primera vez hay una cosa que en muchos estados miembros no existe, que es el derecho de los propios ciudadanos de hacer una legislación. Y de nuestro punto de vista, es importante señalar esto porque es un ejemplo de que la unión Europea es democrática a pesar de las acusaciones que recibe, no?

Sí. Pero he leído que todavía un 70% de los ciudadanos no saben que existe este instrumento y entonces, quizás... claro, las iniciativas pueden comunicar sus iniciativas, pero quizás también sería...

Que se harían campañas más amplias?

Sí...

Es posible que tengas razón.

Y en este año, el año del ciudadano Europeo, sí que hay más iniciativas, no?

Sí. Pero es decir, la propia Vicepresidente Reding en los debates que hace con los ciudadanos habla mucho de la Iniciativa Ciudadana.

Esto ya es un primer paso. Pero eso de comunicar las Iniciativas Ciudadanas quizás también es un problema de comunicar algo a nivel europeo.

Mhm.

Comunicar algo a nivel de Cataluña o España quizás es más fácil, pero a nivel Europeo...

Sí...

Es complicado. Y la Comisión o Usted seguro que tiene experiencia con este problema. Que nos puede contar?

Tú has estudiado comunicación, verdad?

Sí.

Te acuerdas lo que es la comunicación?

Sí.

Hay un emisor que emite un mensaje en un código a un receptor del mensaje. Vale? Para que este proceso se pueda realizar, hace falta: Primero, que el receptor sepa quien es el emisor. Cuándo hablamos de Europa, quién es el emisor? Desde tu punto de vista? Es Barroso? Es Van Rumpuy? Es la Bundeskanzler Merkel? Es el presidente de Irlanda? Es Schulz?

Sí...

Quién es? Hay una primera dificultad. Es decir. La gente cuesta identificar quién es Europa. Vale, este es el primer problema. El segundo problema es que la audiencia a la que nos dirigimos es muy diversa. Hay países, quizás en Baviera, es muy interesante la iniciativa ciudadana. En Portugal a lo mejor les da igual la Iniciativa Ciudadana. En Suiza, donde hay iniciativas para todo, quizás es interesante, pero en Lituania no es interesante. Entonces, hay que adaptar el mensaje a cada de las 27 audiencias, 28 a partir del 1 de julio. En un código que ellos pueden entender. El código que pueden entender por ejemplo aquí en Cataluña el código es el catalán. Pero si yo voy con estos posters a Múnich, no me entenderás. Hace falta hacerlo en alemán, no? Y quizás, no lo sé, en Múnich además hubiera algún toque de variedad dialectal bávara para que la gente se entendiera más identificada. O que hay que tener cuidado con qué pones, según qué países, no? Porque una palabra que tiene sentido en Inglés, por ejemplo no tiene sentido en Español. O una expresión. Luego, está el tema. Es decir, Iniciativa ciudadana consiste en conseguir que personas de siete países, y un millón, además, se pongan de acuerdo en pedir la misma cosa a Bruselas. Es una cosa que mucha gente ya, viendo la complejidad del tema, se desanima, no? Y como esto hay muchísimas otras cosas. Por ejemplo, sabes, lo que es el Enflectum?

Enflectum?

Sí. No has oído hablar de esto nunca?

No.

En inglés se llama ownership unbundling. Es una cosa importantísima en la creación de un mercado interior de la electricidad. Pero a ti como ciudadana probablemente no te importa un ramo. Pero sí te importa que la factura de electricidad sea la más barata posible, verdad?

Sí.

Bueno, pues para que esto sea posible, el Enflectum como concepto complicadísimo se tiene que utilizar. Y como esto hay muchísimas otras cosas. Es decir, tenemos un emisor, que es difícil de identificar que tiene que comunicar mensajes complejos en 27 idiomas distintos para audiencias que son muy diversas. Y es más que muy complicado. En el tratado de Lisboa, la Iniciativa Ciudadana era una de las cosas que había, pero en el Tratado de Lisboa había muchísimas cosas más con lo cual este mensaje es difícil de que pase. Comunicar en Europa es un poco misión imposible. Comunicar en Alemania es mucho más sencillo. Es fácil identificar los emisores, el público es único, el código es único y los temas posiblemente son próximos a la gente, no?

Bueno, este problemas también tendrán las iniciativas Ciudadanas. No solamente la Unión Europea.

Desde luego. La Iniciativa tiene este problema también. Pero es decir, sí que es verdad que cada vez hay más grupos de presión a nivel Europeo. Greenpeace, por ejemplo. Para una iniciativa Ciudadana ecológica... Greenpeace tiene oficinas en los 27 estados miembros de la Unión Europea. Yo que sé... Organizaciones de consumidores... también los habrá en los 27 Estados Miembros. No sé. Grupos de presión de protección de los animales, por los derechos civiles, hay muchos, no? Son internacionales. Entonces, es difícil, pero no es imposible. De todas maneras, también es importante que las Iniciativas Ciudadanas sean realmente Europeas. Porque si fuera utilizar la Iniciativa Europea para intereses muy especiales nacionales, entraríamos en una dinámica que no es positiva.

Y ya ha mencionado el déficit democrático. Pero realmente cree que la Iniciativa Ciudadana disminuye el déficit democrático de la Unión Europea?

Contribuye a disminuirlo. Desde luego.

Porque las Iniciativas pueden solicitar a la Comisión que la Comisión haga una Iniciativa legislativa pero la Comisión no tiene que hacerlo.

Es muy difícil que la Comisión Europea si recibe una Iniciativa que cumple con todos los tramites no haga una iniciativa legislativa si cae dentro de la competencia de la UE. Otra cosa es qué iniciativa legislativa va a hacer, no? Te pongo un ejemplo: Cuando se aprobó el Tratado de Lisboa, el Tratado incluía la creación de un cuerpo de voluntarios humanitarios europeos que tenía que ir a los países en crisis a ayudar. Cuando se hizo esta iniciativa, que era de un Europaparlamentario griego, se pensó que era una buena idea. Luego, cuando se consultó a los ONGs se vio que los ONGs tenían miedo de que eran voluntarios que no eran preparados y no tienen una formación necesaria a zonas de conflicto o a zonas de catástrofe donde el lugar de ayudar sería esto. Entonces, la comisión tenía la opción legal de hacer esta iniciativa legislativa pero después de hacer esta consulta pública vio que tampoco era una idea tan... tan buena. Con lo cual, qué es lo que se hizo? Pues, desarrolló una proposición legislativa en respuesta a la obligación legal pero que hacía un cuerpo humanitario distinto del que se había pensado originariamente. Pues, con la IC puede pasar algo parecido, es decir los promotores de la IC quieren una cosa, la comisión cuando hace una iniciativa legislativa tiene que hacer una consulta pública primero, de la consulta pública pueden salir unas cosas u otras y de lo que salga, pues, haga una proposición legislativa u otra. Además, la comisión tiene

que hacer una iniciativa legislativa que tiene que ser aprobada por el Parlamento y el Consejo. Con lo cual, no puede hacer cualquier propuesta legislativa, porque luego hay el debate en el Consejo y el Parlamento, no? Entonces, yo creo que es bueno, que la iniciativa legislativa no vaya directamente a las cámaras que toman la decisión, porque a lo mejor habría mucha ilusión en conseguir los votos y el Parlamento no haría nada .

Pero piensa que ahora hay como un poco de presión para las Instituciones Europeas para quizás... aprobar alguna de las IC que ha alcanzado un millón de firmas porque si ninguna iniciativa no lo logra, entonces quizás es decepcionante?

Acaba de empezar, deja un poco de tiempo. Lo que tiene que hacer es respetar las reglas. Se hace una ley, la ley dice estas condiciones, las condiciones tienen que cumplirse. Puede ser un útil válido o puede ser un útil imperfecto. Siempre se puede modificar con el tiempo, no? Y tampoco creo que sea prudente aceptar cualquier iniciativa legislativa, porque si no, la iniciativa caería mal, no? El instrumento está ahí. Si se quiere utilizar, se utiliza. Pero si no hay necesidad porque ya se está legislando bien, tampoco hace falta, no?

Bueno. Y en el tema de canales de comunicación, que sabe Ud. de los canales de comunicación que se pueden usar, que es lo más eficaz a nivel Europeo, para comunicar un tema Europeo, es el Internet, es el Social media, es la prensa...?

Son todos. Es decir, no tenemos... Comunicar Europa es tan complicado que no podemos renunciar a ningún canal de comunicación. Todos son buenos. Desde hablar... todo desde hablar con gente de tesis doctorales, hacer conferencias, utilizar los medios de comunicación, las redes sociales se están utilizando cada vez más, los videos... excepto las campañas de publicidad que no usamos casi nunca, porque tiene un coste que no podemos asumir, todos los demás canales los estamos tratando de utilizar. Para nosotros, lo que intentamos siempre, es salvar la distancia que hay entre el emisor y el receptor. La existencia de estas representaciones tiene este objetivo. Es hacer canales con los ciudadanos. Por eso hay una oficina en Múnich también. Hay una oficina en Barcelona, hay una oficina en Madrid. Es decir, hay una oficina en Bonn, hay una oficina en Berlín. Lo que intentamos es que el ciudadano de Barcelona que pasa delante de la Pedrera, puede entrar un momento y decir: Oye, a ver, Europa, que puedes hacer por mí? Pero hay una dificultad que en el ámbito de la comunicación es difícil de solucionar y es que los responsables del poder ejecutivo son elegidos por cada estado miembro. Y esto hace que muchas veces las decisiones que se toman en un ámbito concreto, digamos, la IC es un tema que trata mucho la Vicepresidenta Reding, no? Es decir, la Vicepresidenta Reding es una persona muy conocida en Luxemburgo. Pero no sé si en Múnich alguien conoce a la Vicepresidenta Reding. O conoce al comisario de Lituania, o al comisario Checo, no? Lo conoce alguien? No. Por qué? Porque cada estado miembro pone a uno. Y este uno que va ahí lo decide directamente el Estado Miembro. Lo cual hace que si una ciudadana de Baviera no quiere... lo le gusta la política del Comisario Fuller, no tiene la posibilidad de votar en contra de lo que decide el comisario Fuller en las instituciones Europeas, no? Entonces, esto hace que la identificación del emisor sea muy complicado. Y es igual el canal que utilices. Y es mucho más fácil, cuando el ministro alemán de exterior vaya al consejo vaya al Consejo y escucha lo que dice el comisario Fuller y entonces tu tienes para identificar al ministro de exteriores y no al comisario Fuller. Con lo cual, en mi modo de ver, mejoraría mucho la visibilidad de la UE si se pudiera escoger directamente al presidente de la CE. Porque entonces los ciudadanos por primera vez los ciudadanos pueden decir: yo puedo influir en la política que hará este señor. Porque si este no me gusta, votaré a otro en las elecciones siguientes, entiendes?

Sí, pero entonces serían elecciones de la Comisión?

Lo que se está hablando ahora es que para los próximos elecciones en mayo de 2014, cada partido político europeo presente un candidato por partido europeo. Los socialistas parece que van a presentar a Martin Schulz a ser elegido presidente de la CE.

Ah, de la Comisión y no del Parlamento?

Claro. Es más. Podría ser de la Comisión y del Consejo, de los dos. Y esto sería un cambio fortísimo, porque Martin Schulz no se pudiera limitar a hacer campaña en Alemania. Tendría que ir a Francia, tendría que ir a España, a Portugal...

Pero solamente sería el presidente, no serían todos los comisarios.

Sí. Sería solo el presidente, pero es suficiente. En Alemania, ahora tendréis elecciones para elegir al parlamento, no? De la CDU conocerás a Merkel, no? Y de los Socialistas, quien es el que presentan?

Peer Steinbrück.

Peer Steinbrück. Entonces dices: A mí me gusta Merkel y su gobierno. No sé quien es el ministro de Economía... bueno ese sabe todo el mundo. Pero quiero decir: Si no me gusta la política economista de Merkel, votaré socialistas. Y sé que si ganan los Socialistas saldrá Steinbrück. Y si los socialistas no me gustan, como lo hicieron con, yo que sé, con Schröder, y si no quiero que salgan otra vez, pues votaré a Merkel.

Sí.

Vale? Pero sabes, luego Merkel cogerá su gobierno. Pues, con la Comisión puede ser parecido. Si la política que está haciendo el Sr. Barroso en este momento, no te gustara y dices, pues, este lo está haciendo muy mal, en la actualidad no tienes la posibilidad de decir, pues, yo quiero a este otro. Y no hay nadie en tu país que pueda decirte: Yo lo haré mejor porque yo lo haré esto esto y además allá. Las decisiones del Parlamento Europeo te vendrán por Baviera, es más. Es que vengan políticos bávaros a Baviera y te venga a hablarte, pues, de los problemas de Baviera. Y no de los problemas Europeos. Por qué? Porque estos ya escogerán al presidente de la comisión Europea. Todavía lo escogerá la canciller federal que vaya al Consejo Europeo y ya el candidato para presidir las Comisiones es este. Entonces, claro. El ciudadano no tiene ninguna posibilidad de reaccionar ahí. Entonces, que es lo que se hace. Como solamente se puede influir en quien será la persona en Alemania que irá al Consejo y elige el Presidente de la Comisión, pues se interesa de política alemana. No se interesa de política Europea. Entonces, para mí, el gran cambio en la comunicación Europea se produciría si el ciudadano tiene la posibilidad de influir en la elección del presidente de la comisión. Y por eso hace falta que vayamos a ser una federación Europea. De ahí que Europa está en un proceso de cambio muy profundo en este momento. Y esto es precisamente lo que promueve en el debate la Vicepresidenta Reding. Sea, lo que está diciendo la Vicepresidenta Reding, es que el debate sobre el futuro de Europa no lo hagan los jefes de estado gobierno, sino que lo hagan los ciudadanos. Que vayan los ciudadanos y digan: Yo lo que quiero para Europa es esto. Qué es lo que pasa? Que muchos ciudadanos no están interesados. Y esto es difícil de cambiar. Entonces, como hacerlo interesante para los ciudadanos? Pues, Una manera de hacerlo es lo que hace la vicepresidenta Reding. Una idea es el debate con el ciudadano, el ir por toda Europa, lo que está haciendo ella, y encontrarse con gente por Europa, hacer entrevistas con medios de comunicación locales hacer que el debate se envíe por los redes sociales que haya un Tweetwall, en el que la gente pueda participar, y haga sus comentarios o sus reacciones y por esta manera, pues, intentar que el ciudadano diga: Bueno, lo que estoy diciendo yo, alguien lo está escuchando. Y a mi me parece que es una muy buena iniciativa,

pero luego, bueno, todos los comisarios tienen su cuenta Twitter, todos los portavoces tienen su cuenta Twitter, nosotros tenemos una cuenta Twitter, Facebook se utiliza cada vez más... Yo soy escéptico de los impactos que pueden tener las redes sociales en el conjunto. Quizás porque yo soy muy viejo ya. Pero tú... como lo ves con las redes sociales?

Sí, yo obtengo casi toda la información que es nueva de Twitter o de Facebook.

Sí?

Sí, porque casi siempre estoy conectada y entonces veo ahí primero la noticia y después accedo a otros medios online...

Pero esto es interesante, es decir: Para advertir que el medio online ha sacado algo, Twitter es muy útil. Pero la referencia siempre es el medio online.

Sí.

Entonces, si tu dices... por qué? Por qué los medios son los que tienen la credibilidad. La Süddeutsche Zeitung. Son todavía ellos que tienen la credibilidad. Twitter puede acelerar esto. Tu puedes leer un artículo interesante puedes enviar a tus seguidores... es decir... este proceso es muy interesante. Y saldrá ahí. Pero si tu escribes tu propio blog, como Christine Memminger, tendrás tu credibilidad, porque hay gente que te sigue que te conoce personalmente. Pero si yo leo tu blog y dices: El director de la oficina de Barcelona es tonto y no se entera de nada. Y lo pones ahí, yo no te puedo identificar como quien eres que ha escrito esto mientras si esto es una columna en la Süddeutsche Zeitung, diciendo el director de esta oficina es tonto yo puedo ir a un tribunal y atacar a la Süddeutsche Zeitung. Porque es un medio público. Pero tú eres una persona privada. Como persona privada puedes decir lo que quieras. Por eso con los diarios todavía tienes la credibilidad por el hecho que son atacables. Mientras que los Blogs, las redes sociales, Facebook todas estas cosas, que no sabes el origen y tal, te falta credibilidad.

Entonces sería la tarea de los medios de calidad quizás plantar mas estos temas Europeos? Ya lo hacen cada vez más, pero casi nunca son temas titulares... Las iniciativas Ciudadanas casi no aparecen.

Pero para esto te tienes que preguntar qué es lo que hace una cosa una noticia. Cuales son las noticias, te acuerdas?

Claro, actualidad...

Actualidad es el tema más importante. Ahí Europa tiene una dificultad que es que lo que saca Europa nunca parece actual. Tardan tanto en elaborar una propuesta legislativa, lo proponen al Parlamento, va al Consejo... tarda tanto que esto afecta tu vida cotidiana que habrán pasado dos años. Con lo cual ya te parece viejo, muchas veces. Pero esto es una solamente. Cual es la siguiente que es importantísimo?

Cercanía. Lo que afecta a mí.

Exactamente. Proximidad. Por ejemplo, en esta oficina somos ocho trabajando. Si yo mañana me tiño el cabello de rojo, esto es una gran noticia en este círculo. Por qué? Por que esto afecta a ellos, lo ven y dicen jo.. el jefe se ha teñido el pelo de rojo. Aquí es una gran noticia. En cambio, si un tío se tiñe el pelo rojo en Tokio, aquí no nos enterramos. Para que algo que pasa en Tokio nos afecte a nosotros, tiene que ser un terremoto, un Tsunami, o que se hunda la economía. O una cosa muy curiosa, que Claudia Schiffer se casa con un japonés, por decir

algo. Tiene que ser algún otro elemento de la noticia, que son el conflicto, la notoriedad, la fama, todos estos elementos.

Así que Europa todavía parece demasiado lejos?

Exactamente. Exactamente. Y lo parece por diversos motivos. Primero, porque físicamente está lejos. Pero también está lejos en el sentido en que entre Bruselas y tu como receptora de la noticia hay tres o cuatro intermediarios de la noticia, que al final la noticia parece como muy muy lejos. Parece la galaxia que está lejana de las galaxias, sabes? Pues, eso es Bruselas. Una galaxia muy leja, donde pasan cosas. Pero cuando te afectan es cuando el ministro de Alemania toma la decisión. No cuando se toma la decisión en Bruselas. Y eso hace lo de la distancia. Es importantísimo. Y eso es nuestro principal trabajo: Romper la distancia. El esfuerzo es acercarte al ciudadano. El Problema es... Alemania tiene 80.000 Ciudadanos y es difícil llegar a todos. Pero Europa tiene 500.000. Así que Europa tiene una dificultad añadida que es por los medios que tiene Bruselas. Bruselas tiene 50.000 funcionarios, no? Y con la mejor voluntad del mundo... hablan muchas idiomas, hacen lo que pueden pero es muy difícil llegar a todos.

Pero si ahora escucho esto, que la Comisión ya tiene estos problemas en comunicación, que normalmente se supone que tiene todas las posibilidades y dinero para estrategias de comunicación, tiene las diferentes lenguas y normalmente tiene todo... pero una Iniciativa Ciudadana entonces lo tiene mucho más difícil! Porque la iniciativa normalmente no tiene el dinero, no tiene la organización, nada.

Bueno, los recursos de la comisión son muy limitadas, eh? El presupuesto comunitario es un 1% de la Unión Europea. El español es el 46% del PIB nacional. Es... en términos absolutos, pero en términos relativos mucho más... los medios que tiene la comisión son muy pocos. Para gente con la iniciativa ciudadana... claro, no digo que sea fácil tienes que ir a movilizar a gente de por lo menos 7 estados miembros de la Unión Europea. No son tantos, eh? Europa tiene 27 Estados miembros. Y no puede ser que... no sé. A la gente de Múnich le interesa mucho, yo qué sé... la abolición de los toros. Pues, claro, si solo la ciudad de Múnich lo hace y consigue un millón de firmas, no es europeo. Claro que hay dificultad. Ciertamente, que no es fácil. Pero la Comisión también ha intentado que no sea fácil un poco para intentar que la IC no se utilice como una herramienta de Lobby, un poco a corto plazo. Porque puede ocurrir que la gente que utiliza la IC es del lobby nuclear. Que los centros nucleares estén en toda Europa. Esto sí que tienen muchos recursos. Estos sí que tienen gente en toda la UE. Sí que pueden pagar traducciones. Claro, tampoco es lo que queremos hacer, que es una cosa muy fácil y que los lobbies puedan montarlo a su cuenta. Que sea de los ciudadanos, la iniciativa, no? Entonces, claro. Dónde está el equilibrio entre hacer la cosa muy fácil y hacerla demasiado difícil para que realmente sea una cosa ciudadana? Es difícil.

Sí, es difícil. Pues, muchas gracias.

De nada.

6.2 Problem-centred interviews

6.2.1 Structure

Organization of communication

Who is responsible for communication of your ECI? Do you have a special team for it?

Development of communication strategy and tools

How did you start communicating your ECI? Can you explain me every communication tool you developed, and why you did it?

How do you connect with the media (TV, radio, press...)?

Which tool is the most important? Why?

Audience

Do you have a focus on a special audience? Which audience is that?

How do you try to reach more or new audience?

Which kind of events do you organize? Conferences, distributing flyers, special audiences like students, workers...?

Problems

How do you manage communication in different languages?

Which (other) problems do you have to communicate your initiative?

Planning the future

Are you planning something special in future? What?

Funding

How is your initiative financed? Do you have a special budget for communication?

6.2.2 E-mail of an anonymous member, Fraternité 2020

Answers provided via E-Mail on May 31, 2013.

Organization of communication

Who is responsible for communication of your ECI? Do you have a special team for it?

At F2020 everybody is responsible for communication. We have dedicated people that take care of our social media channels. But else everybody promotes our initiative within their means wherever they are.

Development of communication strategy and tools

How did you start communicating your ECI? Can you explain me every communication tool you developed, and why you did it?

For us communication was of course somewhat facilitated by being the very first ECI, registered on Europe Day 2012. This gave us a 5 minute report in the main news section of ARTE, for example. Before registration we focused on our homepage and Facebook as communication tools. Unfortunately, our homepage cannot be well displayed on mobile devices. That is a real tragedy, really, but something that is too late to change now. Anyway, we are quite content with our performance on social media platforms.

How do you connect with the media (TV, radio, press...)?

We occasionally issue press releases and have a separate media section on our homepage for a couple of months now. Unfortunately, this is not working quite as well as we would like to.

Which tool is the most important? Why?

At this point, Facebook. It is much easier for people to invite their friends and spread the word.

Audience

Do you have a focus on a special audience? Which audience is that?

Young people and students should be happy to sign for more exchange programmes like Erasmus. As most of us are students ourselves, this is our natural target group I'd say.

How do you try to reach more or new audience?

Through Facebook, partly, but also simple Emails or trying to tell people on the streets, on a night out etc.

Which kind of events do you organize? Conferences, distributing flyers, special audiences like students, workers...?

We have organized conferences in the EP. From a certain point of view that was very successful. We have over 70 supporting MEPs at this point. Unfortunately, it did not bring us many new signatures as the EP is not very high on the media's agenda.

Problems

How do you manage communication in different languages?

We all speak English at Fraternité 2020. Some better, some worse. But on balance everybody can communicate with everybody.

Which (other) problems do you have to communicate your initiative?

Lack of interest from the media.

Planning the future

Are you planning something special in future? What?

To collect 1 million signatures ;-)

Funding

How is your initiative financed? Do you have a special budget for communication?

We have a couple of Euros for communication yes. We spend most of it on Facebook promoting our initiative. It is actually quite decent value for money. If we could spend 10,000 EUR on FB that would probably suffice to take us over 100,000 signatures, which is an important psychological barrier. Unfortunately, we do not nearly have that kind of money.

6.2.3 Transcript Pablo Sánchez Centellas, Water is a human right

Interview via Skype on May 29, 2013

Christine Memminger: Me puedas describir cómo está organizado el grupo de comunicación en vuestra iniciativa? O sólo eres tú?

Pablo Sánchez: Pues, soy yo. Lo que pasa es que nosotros tenemos una coordinación europea donde hay tres, cuatro personas, y a nivel más practico, pues, lo hago yo. Para francés, ingles, español, italiano. Para holandés, alemán es mi compañero, que trata un poco mas el tema del policing... pero bueno, el es holandés y depende de la gente que nos contacta... pues, entonces es él. Por otro lado, tenemos coordinadores nacionales. Cada país, y depende del nivel de movilización, o sea, del nivel del tamaño de la campaña, también hay una persona que se ocupa de prensa.

Mhm. Como ya has mencionado este problema de las lenguas... pues, como lo organizáis en la comunicación?

Internamente la coordinación se hace en inglés. Cuando hablamos con los responsables nacionales, pedimos que la persona que entra en contacto con nosotros, hablase inglés. Pero es un tema complicado, porque los que llevan el tema en Francia, no hablan tanto inglés y tal... y bueno entonces si tenemos reuniones, a veces son bilinguales, con ingles y francés.

Pero cuando habláis con la audiencia, depende de los diferentes países o también es el Inglés?

Nosotros formalmente decidimos trabajar en inglés, francés, italiano, español, alemán, checo, rumano, danés, griego, y finlandés... no sabíamos que hacer así que lo dejamos un poco al externo. Esas son las banderitas que también aparecen en la página web. Cuando enviamos un newsletter, el boletín que tenemos, que llega a unos 15mil personas abonadas, lo enviamos en inglés y ponemos vínculos en todas estas lenguas. Casi todas las lenguas podemos organizar desde aquí. Para el checo y el rumano tenemos colegas que están ahí pero trabajamos con ellos. Y en un momento había tantos Griegos interesados que decidimos incorporar el Griego

como lengua. Luego, las noticias en general salen en inglés. Y de hecho la página en inglés es la más visitada de todas. Pero por ejemplo los grupos en el Facebook que se han creado, cada uno se ha creado cuando ha querido y donde ha querido y en la lengua que ha querido. Cuándo quiero decir que en un tiempo alrededor del día del agua. Porque había muchos eventos por el día del agua y eso lo hacía la gente en su idioma.

Sí. Entonces, como habéis empezado a comunicar a la gente que tiene que firmar la iniciativa, como habéis empezado comunicarla?

Lo primero que hicimos fue contactar... nosotros como EPSU, o sea sindicato europeo de servicios públicos tenemos 8 millones de afiliados, 4,5 en Europa, en la Unión Europea. Tenemos unos 200 sindicatos afiliados, por eso hay este número. Y nosotros lo que hicimos es pedir a los afiliados que reenviasen un email que nosotros editamos. Pero no tenemos ninguna capacidad de hacerlo ni de obligarles a hacerlo. Pues, eso. El primer trabajo era el interno, asegurarnos que la información estaba bien distribuida. Lo segundo, hemos construido una coalición europea que está en la página web, European Network, European environmental view, women in europe for a sustainable future, social platform, Agua pública europea. Estas son superadores de agua pública, asociaciones de salud pública, los que luchan que la gente se haga visible en la red, luego hay asociaciones ambientales, etc. Entonces, pedimos a esas organizaciones que enviasen un mail a sus miembros para que en todos los países se hiciese este tipo de alianzas. Pero no podemos obligar tampoco que todos estas lleven bien entre ellos. Entonces hicimos una invitación para que la gente hiciese este tipo de coaliciones. Y en eso, lo que siempre todo el mundo pide a todo el mundo, que vuestros miembros lo reenvíen y tal. No es suficiente solo esto. Sirve para hacerte notar. Pero si necesitas una movilización permanente, en varios países, y quieres que siga, tienes que conseguir que la gente se recuerde de que tienes una iniciativa. Por ejemplo, nosotros hasta enero teníamos 205.000 firmas que eran fundamentalmente internos. Toda esta gente con la que trabajamos... Fue en enero cuando el tema de la iniciativa, Las concesiones, que en Alemania fue un tema importante, el mes en que pasaron muchas cosas. Primero, hubo un programa de la WDR, del monitor, hubo von Pilsig, con un show, y luego había mucha gente que decidía a hacer grupos de Facebook. Eventos de Facebook, en alemán, en inglés... y hubo un evento que llegó a tener 150.000 personas que asistían y casi un millón de invitados.

Y que tipos de eventos eran entonces?

Era un evento para firmar.

Ah. Y solamente organizado via Facebook?

Via Facebook por gente que yo no conocía. Ellos no estaban en el comité de la organización ni nada. Y eso es debido al debate público que había en Alemania. Hubo varios grupos. Solo había uno que de verdad tenía muy buena comunicación.

Y la pagina web teníais desde al principio, no?

La pagina web, si. Claro, nosotros lanzamos la pagina web el 4 de septiembre cuando ya habíamos hecho suficientes tests del sistema de firmas, del online collecting system. Nosotros recibimos de la autoridad alemana el 9 de agosto el visto bueno, de hecho está en la página web. El prime assisting... cuando lo abres, se abre un documento del Bundesamt für... etc. Eh, alemán. Y espera, la fecha está aquí. El 10 de julio. Entonces, el 10 de julio nos responde y el 9 de agosto terminaron los first tests. Y aún así teníamos muchísimas problemas en el primer mes, entonces decidimos lanzarlo en septiembre. La comisión nos dijo que como nosotros quisiésemos y tal y como era como un experimento, porque fuimos los primeros, y la

comunicación con la comisión funcionaba, no sé, pues, mucho los propusimos. Entonces, nosotros desde el principio hicimos una pagina web, el Facebook, la pagina en ingles, la que tiene ahora unos 7.000 personas, pero hasta enero no llevaba 500. Pero hay mas paginas. Mucha gente decidió... digamos: hay una pagina oficial, espera... (envía el enlace vía Skype a la interrogadora) que tiene estos 7.000 y pico. Es la pagina que gestionamos desde aquí. Pero ha habido más. Sobre todo, lo que ha habido y ya no existen, son muchos eventos. De gente de firmar un día u otro día... ect.

Mhm. Y el Twitter también es importante para vosotros?

Menos. Menos. No hemos conseguido con Twitter una gran reacción. Yo creo que el lado inmediato del Twitter es contra-productivo cuando tienes que firmar algo.

Por qué contra-productivo?

Facebook es menos inmediato. Si tuiteas mucho, el mensaje inicial se pierde. Digamos, Twitter es más para una polémica. Y la verdad, polémica tampoco es. Las firmas por una causa y ya está.

Sí.

Twitter funciona, por ejemplo, cuando el presidente de Nestlé está en nuestros latest news, dijo que el agua era un mercantil. Eso empezó a tuitarse. Es una vergüenza, una vergüenza, una vergüenza... y una serie de gente dijeron: Y para responder a esto: firmar, firmar, firmar. Y ahí teníamos en varios países – Finlandia, Reino Unido – varios links. Pero a parte de estas cosas que son muy polémicas, Twitter no... tiene un gran efecto. Es una ayuda, pero no es... En cambio, Facebook es mucho mejor porque te permite tener un debate político un poco con mas profundidad. Además... con la pagina alemana que se llamaba... Wasser ist ein Menschenrecht, eh, la gente lo que hacia era difundir informaciones tipo: El Parlamento Europeo va a votar esto, tenemos que hacer algo. O tipo: Hay una resolución del Bundestag sobre el agua como derecho humano, enviad un mail a vuestro diputado. Y esto tuvo un gran efecto. Y este tipo de iniciativa envió una petición al Bundestag y nadie lo votó, lo votaron solo los verdes. Pero nadie nos preguntó nuestra opinión. Pero me pareció que lo hicieron un poco demasiado rápido.

Y con los medios de comunicación, cómo lo hacéis, habéis establecido una red de contactos o...

Bueno, con el departamento de prensa contactamos con periodistas... pero... ves, cuando hay un interés, ellos te contactan. O sea, yo estaba en la ZDF tres veces, en el WDR una vez, en Arte por los alemanes otra vez, programas con la tele francesa, ellos tienen un programa fronterizo, había un contacto con los alemanes que les habían dicho que envían a mí. O sea, estaba en la televisión, en la radio, estaba en la radio austriaca varias veces, solo en países donde la cosa está más importante. La prensa... hemos tenido artículos en el Frankfurter Allgemeine, en el otro periódico del sur de Alemania...

Süddeutsche Zeitung.

Sí. Y ellos son los que nos contactaban. En España ha habido bastante eco también porque hubo la resolución en Andalucía en el parlamento que votó por apoyarnos, hemos tenido varios pueblos importantes, en Francia también han hecho cosas, y es eso. Cuando hay un interés, te contactan. Hemos tenido 0 efecto mediático en Reino Unido, 0. O un artículo.

Y si ves todo el conjunto de instrumentos de comunicación que usáis, que dirías que es lo mas importante?

Hombre, la televisión. Si tienes acceso a la televisión, y a la radio, pero más a la televisión, tienes un provecho. O sea, si tomas los tres días del Programa de Erwin Pilsig con su show, es como tres meses de trabajo interno. Claro, sin los tres meses de trabajo interno, este hombre no hubiera hecho el show. Además, no puedes tener una estrategia de comunicación muy rígida, inflexible. Tienes que hacer... tienes que ir a todo. Tienes que ir a Blogs, tienes que hacer la distribución en el trabajo, y tienes que pensar que todo ayuda. Evidentemente si tocas la televisión, bueno, pues, ayuda más. Pero no es seguro que... lo que pasa es que este hombre pone el tema también en la página web. Lo has visto?

Sí.

Sea, vamos, lo que hay en la página web es único en el mundo porque no solo hizo publicidad en la página web sino que incluso hizo... atacó indirectamente a la televisión por estar demasiado enclavado, que son las autoridades multinacionales que pagan la publicidad. Entonces, ahora mismo, con la crisis, hay un enemigo público número uno que son los ricos, los grandes multinacionales que no pagan impuestos, y todo... toda televisión, todo ironía, todo sarcasmo contra ellos, tiene un eco positivo muy grande de los ciudadanos, era lo único positivo. Esto en la comunicación siempre... no puedes tener un mensaje negativo. Yo nunca he compartido eso y la prueba es que positivo, negativo depende de muchas cosas en la ultima instancia de la ideología y a veces el irónico es mucho mejor. Que es el negativo. Puede ser muy negativo, siendo irónico. Y de eso el sketch, todo el sketch es muy bueno, o sea por un lado no es una crítica "euroescéptica, anti-europea", so es ser antieuropeo. Pero es percibido como... quien quiera... como... lo que la gente quiere es sentarse el domingo por la tarde tranquilamente para criticar a sus vecinos. Que es un concepto muy real. No? Pero te da igual, no hay un país completamente en rodillas... entonces el casco está muy bien construido y es un eco total. También nos ha permitido en otros lugares: Qué hacéis vosotros? No? Digamos... uno se busca su propia suerte. Y en Alemania ha habido el referéndum en Berlín, ha habido grandes movilizaciones por el tema del agua en otros lugares, hay una red importante que está ahí... y todo hace que puedas conseguir un éxito.

Mhm. Y habéis definido vuestra audiencia de alguna manera?

Al inicio, lo primero era lo nuestro. Nuestros afiliados, la gente que está en las redes, que trabajan sobre el tema del agua. Después ha sido todo el mundo. O sea, nosotros lo que hemos siempre comunicado es que las organizaciones se preguntan: Cuánta gente tenemos? Y a partir de tres, se cojan 200 firmas, se vayan al mercado el domingo, el sábado o entre semana, cuando sea, y recojan firmas. Tenemos muy poca experiencia de gente que diga: no, yo no firmo esto. O sea: Quieres que el agua sea privatizada? No. El 95% de la gente dice esto.

Claro.

Claro, está bien que diga, pero si vamos a la comisión nos dicen no! La empresas privadas... yaya, pero en fin, o sea... hay barreras, no? Pedir papel, pedir el DNI, en ciertos países es problemático etc. Pero si hay gente que te diga, oh, esto no es vinculante, esto no sirve para nada o gente que te diga ya está privatizado todo el mundo o gente que no cree que firmar no cambiará nada. Esto es el problema. En sí mismo es el peor enemigo de esta iniciativa. Y en países donde hay una visión muy negativa del mundo político en general, por ejemplo Europa del este, en algunos de los países de Europa del este. Es complicado.

Sí. Ya habéis alcanzado el número obligatorio de firmas y de países, pero qué estáis planeando ahora hasta el 1 de noviembre porque... todavía os queda tiempo.

No, es que nosotros terminaremos a principios de septiembre y vamos a hacer un año. Nosotros dijimos a la comisión, pues, mira: Nosotros hacemos un año desde que vosotros nos permitáis recoger firmas online. Y hemos sido los primeros. Así que nosotros hacemos 12 meses hace que lanzamos. No cerramos cuando hicimos los 7 países, bueno, 8, porque... primero nos gustaría tener 9 o 10 para estar seguros, ya tenemos 9, Holanda pasó ayer, el mínimo

Muy bien!

Nos faltan 3000 firmas en Grecia, 4000 en España y 5000 en Italia. Para hacer el mínimo y nosotros siempre queremos hacer un 10% más. Luego tenemos más países donde la campaña está en pleno auge. El auge de movilización de la gente. Si cerramos la recollida en un país lo cerramos en todos. Entonces pensamos hacerlo a finales de julio. O a mediados.

A mediados de julio ya cerrar?

Sí. Pero el problema es que la gente que está de vacaciones nos evitan hacerlo. Sobre todo los nórdicos. Dicen no, no, no. Los vacaciones en el norte de Europa son normalmente en julio. Y ya vuelvan a trabajar a principios de agosto. Entonces, en agosto no vamos a hacerlo, porque dejamos fuera muchísima gente, sobre todo mediáticamente... una catástrofe, entonces lo vamos a hacer a principios de septiembre. También porque bueno... como hay un millón de firmas alemanas y elecciones en Alemania, y luego, el tema de la directiva concesiones... el debate va a volver a finales de julio, hasta principios de septiembre. Y también necesitamos apoyo en los consejos.

La pregunta final es sobre la financiación. Cómo está financiada exactamente vuestra iniciativa y tenéis recursos especiales para la comunicación.

A principios de septiembre 2009 el Sindicato Europeo de servicios públicos, decidió, cuando todo el mundo lanzaba iniciativas ciudadanas... a iniciar una iniciativa ciudadana cuando se pudiese. Entonces, en 2009 empezó a ahorrar, entre comillas, para tener suficiente dinero. Hay dos personas que están trabajando a medio tiempo aquí sobre esta campaña, en el departamento de prensa y hay un compañero mío que lleva mas el tema político y trabaja a nivel más técnico, hace mailings, traducciones, etc. Sabes, los 100000 euros que están en la página web de la comisión, estos 100000 euros son para traducción, viaje, coordinación, los logos, el dominio, en fin. Hemos aumentado el dinero un poco este año porque ya no había más, porque como tardamos un año más de lo que inicialmente se había estimado, porque había este cambio de legislación donde las autoridades nacionales tuvieron un año más para prepararse, este año nosotros seguíamos haciendo reuniones, y preparando terrenos, así que gastamos dinero. Y estoy 100000 euros eran del principio de 2009 pero se ahorraron otro 30000 y pico euros para la campaña. Nosotros tenemos un acuerdo con nuestros afiliados que pagan más o menos un euro por afiliado por año. De esto pagamos todo, organización, viaje, etc. Y bueno, y lo que se puede ahorrar. Luego también, las campañas nacionales han decidido poner, en Alemania, en Austria, en Suecia, en Italia, a poner gente en su empleo para un tiempo para trabajar para la campaña. Pero la verdad es que siempre hemos contado con gente que trabaja voluntariamente porque sin eso no hubiéramos podido hacerlo... el trabajo. Que es el trabajo fundamental porque este trabajo sin voluntarios se convierte en algo muy, muy difícil. Es la masa de gente.

Bueno, teníais esta ventaja de tener esta red ya al principio...

Esto es el tema, nosotros también al lanzarnos teníamos ejemplos concretos de Italia... eh, Italia Endesa tiene unos 400000 firmas para hacer un referéndum. Participaron 27 millones de personas, de los cuales 26300000 votaron contra la privatización del agua. Sea, esto es un tema que está ahí. No nos lo hemos inventado. Lo difícil era hacerlo en todos lugares al mismo tiempo, que todo el mundo quisiera el mismo objetivo, es decir, había una serie de dificultades, pero también es una red que hemos ayudado a reconstruir o a... construir. Hemos llegado a... cómo decir... a solidificar. Hay una cosa que se llama European Water movement que es un poco la red que hemos querido crear, no solo nosotros, sino muchos actores cerca y que la idea es que cuando esta iniciativa se termine, pues, bueno, hay que continuar el trabajo. El agua como derecho humano va a tener que trabajarse sobre el terreno y eso a nivel europeo pero para ciertos países que ya estaban haciendo su iniciativa nacional lo lógico era subir a nivel europeo. Sobre todo a nivel internacional y en 2010 Naciones Unidas ya votó una resolución donde declaraba tampoco mucho. Si vas a la página verás que está la gente de diversas instituciones, etc. Hemos querido crear algo donde se puede hacer de la gente que lucha por el agua desde los que son más contra la privatización o hasta gente que está más... no sé... trabajando sobre una cuestión más legal sobre bienes comunes y tal.

Sí, es interesante lo que habéis creado, porque comunicar a nivel Europeo parece difícil y habéis conseguido por lo menos animar a tanta gente ya...

Y más! El problema es que hemos tenido también muchas firmas que no valen, mucha gente que no ha podido firmar, hemos tenido un nivel de pérdidas de firmas al principio muy grande. Es un poco triste, pero bueno, hemos recibido miles de mails, hemos recibido cosas de miles de miles de gente que quiere ayudar, como: soy un austríaco que vivo en Alemania, soy un alemán que vive en Austria, cómo puedo firmar? A ver, no podéis. Es un poco negativo, pero...

Sí, cierto. Pues, esto ha sido lo que quería preguntar, pero no sé si quieres adjuntar algo que todavía no hemos mencionado? Qué piensas que es importante para mi de saber para mi tesis?

No sé. La tesis es más sobre comunicación, no?

Sí.

Bueno, el problema más grande que hemos tenido es explicar los diablos de esta iniciativa ciudadana. Claro, es algo complicado explicar. Y por qué necesitamos estos papeles y por qué esto y tal... Eso requiere... No sé, una ILP en España, sabes una ILP es una IL. Existe desde hace mas que treinta años, es un mecanismo que está en la constitución etc, etc. Y tampoco... en la cabeza no hace falta explicar que es una ILP. En cambio, la ICE, pues, de hecho hemos tenido un e-mail muy gracioso de un alemán que nos decía: Cómo puede ser que yo no conocía las iniciativas ciudadanas europeas? Y yo dije que... bueno responder. Y el automatismo era ese, es decir, cómo puede ser? Bueno, la comisión piensa que sí que la gente lo conoce porque la publicaron en un anexo y está escrito en el Tratado de Lisboa, pero no. Es complicado. Y eso es uno de los grandes problemas que yo supongo que dentro de un año o dos será menos problema.

Sí. Y si ahora una tiene mucho éxito, yo me imagino que esto también tiene un efecto para las otras iniciativas.

También para nosotros, eh? Cuando pasamos en 7 países, es cuando en algunos países la cosa empezó a... en algunos países ha sido, por ejemplo en Finlandia un trabajo durísimo a ganar los primeros 9000. Y una vez se pasó, la dinámica es que van a una velocidad doble de antes.

Es un poco curioso, no? Sea, necesitas 1 millón de firmas para que la gente piense en firmar. Supongo que sí que los otros se beneficiarán, pero depende de la ley que haga la comisión. Si la comisión nos dice gracias y no hacen nada esto les explotará un poco. Porque además hay un... incremento de la visión negativa de la comisión. Así que si no tratan esto con la suficiente premura importancia... van a tener problemas.

Que la gente pierde la confianza?

Sí, es una de las cosas que hemos... hemos visto, no? Que mucha gente decía: Uff, a la comisión pedís esto? Por eso también esperamos tener más países.

Claro, con más países, más presión.

Dos millones de firmas de 14 países, cuatro de los 5 mas grandes y el quinto que es grande, que es el Reino Unido, que ya sabemos lo que es... es un poco la latitud que hay en la comisión, Pues, creemos que tenga un eco suficiente.

Muchas gracias.

6.2.4 Transcript Ana Gorey, High Quality European Education for All

Interview via Skype on May 29, 2013

Christine Memminger: Do you have a team for communication or are you the only person to manage that?

Ana Gorey: We have a small team and two of this team are particularly dealing with the internet and Facebook and Twitter stuff. And Blondine and I do press releases and that stuff so there is a few of us on it.

And do you have a special budget for communication?

Ehm, no. Not really, we didn't say so much for this and so much for that, because we didn't know what would cost that much and that much, so... we just say, we need to spend this on that and then we decide to get ahead or not. I think people... You know, we didn't go and say: This much and that much and so. Right for water had 100000 euros given to them right from the beginning and so, you can budget with that. If you don't have any really... or you don't know how much money you have in the beginning, you can't do that.

And how did you start communicating your initiative?

Well, we first of all, I mean, we sent it to the people we knew and the people we were already working with and then it's a multiplier effect after that.

And how did you develop then, did you have the website right from the beginning?

Yeah, the website was the first thing we did and then the Facebook pages, I mean from when we started.

Yes, and Twitter, you also have an account...

Yeah, but... we linked it up with anything we post on Facebook, so we are not using it like Twitter is being used in another way of... showing what we just put on our Facebook.

And which other social media or canals of communication do you use?

Well, it's primarily Internet and people we get in touch with, like we had some interviews in the press, but we haven't gone out to talk to the press particularly. They contact us if they want to write an article and then they do that. We haven't written any articles or sent... I mean, we did a press release on our launch, which we sent to various news agencies, but that was the only time we did do that.

And how is the response of the media, until now?

We've got lots of likes on our Facebook and lots of followers, but the Facebook, it's... we post something most days, so we have quite a following on Facebook.

And the other media, radio, TV?

I gave a radio interview in Spain, but it is difficult to follow what they do with things or not. In the Netherlands we also gave interviews and they did something around about... but again, that would be our country coordinators dealing with things like that. Denmark is quite active, for example, with media stuff. You can't centralize an ECI very much, because it has to be all over Europe.

But would you say, which tool is the most important?

Well, it has to be the Internet, because it's the only way you can get people to sign. You can't have paper signatures. So... But we did a lot around the Europe day, so we tried to get our country coordinators to do something during Europe day activities, so the open days of EP, in Italy, there were quite a lot events around Europe day activities, so we tried to do a lot about this and so the initiative and ours in particular?

And do you have a special focus on a special audience?

Well, of course. Ours is on education, so yes: parents, teachers, educators in general and also we have a focus as well on children with special needs, that sort of thing. And civil society in general, because it's a citizens' Initiative, so we hope that people who are interested in democratic participation would also be interested in participating in a ECI. So, everything with the European affairs, harmonization of education, these things, European values, European identity... all those are sort of target groups?

And do you do special things to reach this audience, like going to schools, or....

Well, in the different countries, they target different things because each country has different issues, so... in Hungary, you know, what we're saying now happening on education, you know is a lot of unrest there, we have seen it in Denmark, and in UK as well, so each country has slightly different message, is slightly honed. and it depends on who is talking, if I am talking, I focus more on my message and our partners who are more parent association, they are going to turn the focus slightly on theirs, so there's the trade union, dealing with teachers, the focus changes there.

And the different languages...

Yes, we have everything translated in the 23 languages.

But are you also twittering in different languages or things like that?

Well, most of our Facebook postings are in English and... but we have a Facebook page in every single language. So, some of them have little communities around them, some don't. Depending on whether we have active people in those countries or not.

And which problems do you have at the moment with your initiative?

Well, I mean, it's been a year and all the ECIs have met together regularly all year and pointing out all the problems about the regulations and pointed a lot of problems. And that's very well documented.

Yes, I read that. But perhaps you could tell me something about special problems of you initiative?

There are general problems, affecting everybody. But I mean a big problem is data protection, so nobody should really be collecting paper signatures. I don't know, how many of the other initiatives are, but that is almost impossible to do. It's not save. The data requirement is very high and as a data controller you can't possibly control the data, and so you can't collect, so it's feasible to collect data on paper. So that is a complete failure of the citizens initiative that you can collect on paper.

And at the moment, what are you planning for the future?

Well, we are discussing with a couple of people a debate possibly at the end of June and we are looking for doing some sort of competition with university students during the summer months, to try thinking about possible... how to use the summer months, maybe with a sort of a summer family tourist, sort of angles to try to reach people aware on holiday, it is generally a very dead month in August and July in generally, otherwise. And in September we are planning a sort of Ted-Style talk, so there are the things we want to do. And we hope also, something we want to do, around June, would be sort of road trip. Or maybe in September, October.

And in your communication strategy, you are going to change something, or to do something new?

Well, I mean, everything is country level. I mean, we did this sort of idea sort of competition, like 100 signatures and ten members and you know, so that there is somebody helping, but there is no "strategy" as such. We obviously are trying to work through our networks and multiplier effect.

Do you want to add something about communication of your ECI?

What's your thesis on?

Communication of ECI's.

Alright. It obviously has to be done. So, mostly through the internet and that's the best possible way to reach a wider audience. Communication has to be done in the national countries and in the different languages, to stimulate the debate. And, you know, in the end of the day, what all ECI's are asking for is a platform. A multistakeholder platform. So, we don't want necessarily push the issue now, we are just trying to get the platform to bring the citizen, the voice of the citizen to education, instead of... And the themes of education are already very widely debated. There is the rethinking education paper, that's coming out from the commission. There is the international commission with Gordon Brown, they are doing similar, bringing together associations, networks, already working in the field. So, those are

the people we are reaching. How to reach a wider audience... is through the networks. So that's our strategy. Through existing associations and networks and then the multiplier effect.

And where can I find the number of collected signatures that you have until now?

We are not informing people about that, because for us it is not a competition about the number of signatures. Everyone else I trying to tell us it's a competition about signatures and it's not about that. Its about ideas and about creating networks and associations across Europe with the similar ideas.

But then let's say otherwise: are you happy with how its going?

Oh, yes. Very much. It's really really interesting and the people working on the campaign that we have met have been all very interesting. That for us is the reason why we started to use the ECI, more the ECI as another tool, another way of networking. That's the reason we did it, its just another way of raising awareness about our issue. To call it an ECI, we can say we do an ECI, it made it more topical. That's all.

Aha. So, if you don't want to add something more, what could help me for my thesis, this was all...

I think I cant tell you how many of you are writing theses on ECI's. Quite honestly, until you are involved, on a practical basis, you have no clue. No clue. I actually used to think that it is quite interesting that people do research and ask these questions. But just by the questions people ask shows me that they have no idea what any of this means. So, actually, I find it quite interesting what people think the ECI is. So, anyway, As I said. There are so many of these thesis and to me... I get so many questions, and I just find it a little bit... yeah... the real work on the ECI has been done, its over an year it's been going, there are people working on it, we have worked on recommendations, and what can be improved in terms of the regulation and everything. And, until there isn't some sort of framework of the ECI for the ordinary citizen, there is no way that this can work, because there is no money, there is no assistance given to an ordinary citizen, the only group that have manage to get a million signatures started with a huge trade union behind them and 100000 euros. And their own technical setup. So, its pointless in a way because you don't need a ECI if you are already organized. The whole point of a citizens initiative is to connect throughout Europe, and to get organized. And this you cant do in 12 months, without any help from the commission. The commission knows perfectly well many many contacts that would be useful to the ECI. The commission could say: we will do a mail-out, three mail-outs for you in the year, for example. That's how they can help. But they don't. There is nothing. And in the end of the day, the signatures... You don't know who is signing. You cant contact them, you are much better off using a work who are discussing with around, because, at least then, they have a list of people that they can truly reach again. But you cant reach anyone who has voted for you using the ECI. You don't have the e-mail, you don't have anything. You cant even use it. I mean, no one gives you the E-mail-address, of course, its data protection. But at least they are able to mail out to the same people again, So, there is just so many problems of this and if you have to look at it, a purpose that it was set up for, it was set up for the citizen. And if you are already an organized trade union or something like that... Unilever, who was behind the house ECI, why would they do a citizens initiative? They are huge companies, they have plenty of money, they have just to do the lobbying in the corridors, you know, just like the legislation for water. It's, I mean, it helps them to say we have a million citizens behind us, but did they need the ECI for that? Probably not. So I think the focus has to be on what the ECI was originally intended for and you can look at it from that point of view. And if it's the

ordinary citizen, all this discussion about the... communication strategy and this is bizarre. An ordinary citizen is not gonna sit there and thinking along that things.

No, I only think that if I would rise an ECI, I would like to communicate it. I think, communication is very important. And because of that, I do that topic.

Yes, but the means to communicate are relatively limited or they are expensive. Of course you try to get your idea around, you try to explain it, and everything else. But in the end of the day you have to do that in 23 languages, in 27 countries, you need to have the angle that is relevant for these countries and it's something that is very organic. And of course it depends on the different ideas. I mean, we have quite a complex idea, education is something that you have... everybody has an opinion on and it feels like a very strong the debate. If you say, give me the right to vote, everybody will understand that simple message. So, it is also... depends what you want to use the ECI for. We want to use it to stimulate discussion and to raise awareness about the need for a coherent vision of what we want for the future of education in and for Europe. And that's not quite the same as saying can everybody drive 30km/h. You know? So, maybe we can say, the ECI works if it's a very simple yes/no idea. You know? But I believe that as Europeans, I hope that we have a little bit better grass about the concept, about what it is, European identity and how to get that. But anyway, none of the other, and you know, the other ECI from "Erasmus for all", you know, help packer to do Erasmus I mean, for goodness think, I mean, the discussion should be more about, is Erasmus even trying to do what it is really doing, you know? It's not exactly.... Lots of issues like these things as well. And yes, what we want to do in professional communication... is that what the ECI is about? You know, do you need to have advertising agencies and marketing agencies and all of this? Which point then... we really are not making it very accessible for the ordinary citizen. And I don't think our team is an ordinary citizens' team, We have very experienced people on our team. But I still try to put myself in the position as somebody who would be an ordinary citizen trying to get an ECI up and running. With literally no know-how of legal, of framework, of nothing. It's extremely difficult technical and legal expertise required. Just to even get the thing going. "Let me vote" actually reregistered and it still took them three months to get online to get the signature thing working. Those have real problems, believe me. And the "Let me vote" there is no message there, you know? Anyway, that's all.

Thank you for these insights.

6.2.5 Transcript Gael Drillon, Pour une gestion responsable des déchets

Interview via Skype on May 30, 2013

Christine Memminger: Who is responsible for communication in your initiative? Is it only you or do you have a team?

Gael Drillon: No, it's me. It's me because in the team of the ECI I'm the one to work and to manage all things.

And do you only communicate in French or also in other languages, because your website is only in French.

I try to communicate in other languages, I do the Google translate on the website. But on the European Commission website I can't use other language because the Commission controls all the translations and they refuse my translations. It's not conform.

Aha. But how did you start with your ECI, did you have the website from the beginning, how did you manage communication tools?

No, we have the website since the beginning of the project in June 2011, we have Facebook, also.

And do you use other social media, twitter for example, or other things?

Just the Facebook page. But I have a Twitter account and I post a lot of articles on Twitter or Facebook.

And can you tell me the name of the Facebook Page and Twitter account? You also can write it here...

Ah ok. (He sends me the links via Skype-Chat)

Thank you. And how do you connect with other media, for example with TV or radio? Did you try to communicate something there?

Yes I try but I can see that media don't take attention about the project because I am just a citizen and I have no power, no... I'm not known. I'm just a citizen, I'm Gael Drillon and they don't pay attention about what I say, what I can... publish on the website...

But you have that team of 7 people from different countries, no? because only then you can set up the initiative.

I don't understand the question.

Do you have people in other countries like in Germany or in England, I don't know?

Yes. I can give you the list. I have Poland, Sweden, England, Germany, Slovakia, Belgium... I give you the list. (He sends it via Skype-chat)

Okay. Thank you. And do they also try to communicate in their countries?

Today, in fact, we wait for the collecting system in the website, because there is a lot of problems with the collecting system. So, today, this afternoon, I have a web-conference with the EU commission to...build an informatic system on my homepage. And I hope that tomorrow I can start to collect on the website. And if I can, I will use my Facebook, my Twitter to try to promote the project.

Yes.

Today I can't promote because there is a... no tools on the webpage to collect the signatures.

So, it is hard for you to build up everything at the moment?

Yes, this project is very typical at the moment, because I have no resorts, no budget. So I make it at home, in the night, after the work, with my old PC, and so it's difficult because it needs a lot of energy and a lot of time. But the process is really simple for everything for something, its not the technical difficulty, its difficult because I need a lot of energy and time.

And until now which communication tool is most important for you?

Facebook, Twitter, and all social networks and we try to give many messages and to sign the ECI about the waste but the second message is: We can do it! We can use the ECI be a

political actor in Europe and we can give this... we want to demonstrate: citizens can do it and not ONG and all society, just citizens can do it and it is most important for democracy. That you can do it.

And your audience, do you have a special audience?

We have 20000 citizens who signed the paper. And on the website we have 3500.

In total or every day?

Since 2011.

Aha. And what are you planning for the future?

Yes, the deadline for this ECI is December 2013, so today, I have the webconference with the commission. If it's ok, tomorrow I can begin the promotion on the social networks and I want to make a big manifestation in my city and I want to do this manifestation with other associations. (He writes the names via Skype-Chat)

Yes.

So, I want to do this big manifestation to create audience and I wanted to promote the project on this event. In my town we have big events with good impact in the media, because we were good to manifest without problems. And we say that a person is in danger with the toxic and there is a lot of media at this event.

And what do you say what are the problems that you have at the moment with your initiative?

My principle problem is the collect system. It is too difficult to make it and to start the websystem. I have an administrative paper with many pages, and it is very difficult, very technic, and I pass a long time for write and after I have made a relation with the Luxemburg government, because in Luxemburg they give the system and I have a relation with the Commission because the commission who design the system.

And about finance, where do you get your money from?

I have no money, I am just a citizen, so today I arrived to make the project without money. I use the free blog, Facebook, I pass a lot of time to take mails about journalists in the way, so my program about money is to call to Brussels to assist at meetings of formation and my program I never met my committee, because we cannot pay the plane and hotel, we just manage the project by internet. Its not very good, because my committee is.. lost motivation.

But perhaps with the online collecting system you can start better?

Yes, I hope so.

So, do you want to tell me something else about your initiative or did we say everything?

If you work about communication, my thing that ECI is not so good for democracy, a ECI needs other systems, but its not communication. I think when the ECI... after the Commission read the ECI, Commission don't make a really participative decision. They just read a citizens proposition. And I think it is the first level to go to European democracy, but it is not sufficient.

Thank you very much for these insights.

6.2.6 E-mail of Jorn Moeskops, Single Communication Tariff Act

Answers provided via E-Mail on February 14, 2013

Organization of communication

Who is responsible for communication of your ECI? Do you have a special team for it?

As communication is mainly in my hands as an administrator, I am the main responsible for the strategies and enjoy strong autonomy, but Martin and Vincent, as founders of the initiative, have the final say and overlook the process where they can. Therefore I think we all play our part in a relatively egalitarian coordination structure. In terms of signatures we are all aware of the success of the initiative, but since I am also in charge of the statistics I have the closest view on the fluctuations in the process.

Development of communication strategy and tools

How did you start communicating your ECI? Can you explain me every communication tool you developed, and why you did it? How do you connect with the media (TV, radio, press...)? Which tool is the most important? Why?

First of all, regarding the website we tried to make access to the relevant information as easy as possible through the press kit.

Also, we hope to show people where we have been active, and which important figures support our initiatives through our press releases online.

Further, through our website we try to attract people to contact us and support our initiative (both materially and with through their personal efforts). In this sense, if you personally support our initiative, we would be most happy if you would be interested to speak on behalf of our initiative for a public of your university or perhaps even support us in one of our upcoming events. Depending on your interest and our precise planning, we would of course offer you our recommendation for your cv, as well as a financial compensation.

Then, through our links to our twitter and facebook pages we hope to get people talking in these fora as well and attract more people to sign.

Also, through benchmarking with our fellow ECI's we try to learn and keep what is useful to us.

Secondly, regarding the social media (twitter and facebook) we try to keep people informed every day of what we have been doing, both in terms of contacts with politicians and civil society actors, and in terms of (upcoming) events.

Also we try to connect with as many (relevant) people as possible through direct interaction with them on facebook, twitter (also retweeting).

Thirdly, we are actively involved in contacting radio channels, getting our stories in newspapers. Regarding newspapers we mainly focus on those oriented towards students, international business and holiday related organizations, as they relate back strongest to our target audience. With respect to press releases we try to react.

Fourthly, we strive to cooperate in our advocacy with different parties in civil society and politics, by naming each other in the media and showing our support.

Audience

Do you have a focus on a special audience? Which audience is that? How do you try to reach more or new audience? Which kind of events do you organize? Conferences, distributing flyers, special audiences like students, workers...?

In the future we are planning to do an advertisement campaign in the relevant EU member states via facebook. Our main focus will be on students, international businesses, and people on holiday, as they have most to gain from our initiative.

Problems

How do you manage communication in different languages? Which (other) problems do you have to communicate your initiative?

We are strongly looking for somebody in Spain (as well as Germany) who would like to more actively support our initiative, so if you or anybody you know would be interested in supporting us we would be most happy to discuss this in more detail.

Planning the future

Are you planning something special in future? What?

We are planning several events, some of which are centered around the agenda of the European Year of the Citizens 2013, others will be related to (summer) festivals, we hope to organise flyering actions in all major cities of Europe, and then we speak about our initiatives at (political departments of) universities.

Regarding the success we have had, we can say that given the limited publicity we have entered into so far we are already satisfied with the response. We can see a clear impact of an action in the media and the number of signatures we get. Therefore it is our expectation that with the upcoming activities we will soon reach the million.

Funding

How is your initiative financed? Do you have a special budget for communication?

6.2.7 Transcript Klaus Sambor, Unconditional Basic Income

Interview via Skype on June 3, 2013

Christine Memminger: Haben Sie für Kommunikation ein spezielles Team? Wie ist das organisiert?

Klaus Sambor: Also es gibt die Organisation von ganz einfach bis sehr komplex. Ganz einfach ist es einmal so, dass wir für jedes Land, es sind inzwischen 20 member states, jeweils einen Organisator haben, oder eine Organisatorin, oder einen Stellvertreter dafür und von denen haben wir die E-Mail-Adressen unter anderem auch. Und wenn wir also zum Beispiel zu einem Meeting einladen, das ist dann, wir nennen das Bürgerinnenausschuss, da sind dann über 50 Leute auf dieser E-Mail-Liste, und da schreibe ich per E-Mail an alle diese eine Einladung mit einem Vorschlag zur Tagesordnung und so weiter und nach der Tagung gibt es dann eben einen Kurzbericht an alle, die teilgenommen haben und auch an die, die nicht kommen konnten, werden auf diese Art und Weise verständigt.

Und wenn man jetzt an so Sachen denkt wie Kommunikation mit Medien, oder die Internetseite, gibt's da jemanden der speziell zuständig ist?

Ja, wir haben so eigene Gruppen, die für bestimmte Aufgabenstellungen zuständig sind. Und da ist eine Gruppe für diese internationale Website für die Bürgerinitiative und da ist ein Team von 5 Leuten zuständig. Zunächst einmal ein sogenannter Security-manager, der dann auch zuständig dafür ist, dass alle Daten, die über das Collection system sozusagen online eingegeben werden, mit Sicherheit nicht gefälscht werden können und so weiter und so weiter, das sind sehr sehr strenge Auflagen. Und dann sind eben an der Website arbeitend, hauptsächlich einer, der sozusagen die aktuell hält, und noch 3 zusätzliche Leute, die ihm auch zuarbeiten. Das ist einmal die eine Gruppe, die die internationale Website bearbeitet. Und immer updated. Eines der wesentlichen Updates ist, wir haben ja diese EBI in Englisch eingereicht, nachdem wir uns also lange unterhalten mussten, mit allen 15 Ländern uns so weiter, in welcher Sprache wir das machen, hatte man sich dann auf den Französischen Vorschlag hin sogar auf Englisch geeinigt. Also wir haben das auf Englisch eingereicht. Und dann war ein zweites Team natürlich notwendig, dass wir das in möglichst viele Sprachen übersetzen. Und das ist auch über eine Facebookseite gelaufen, wo wir alle Organisatoren dieser 15, bzw inzwischen 20 Ländern angeschrieben haben, sie mögen schauen, ob sie bei sich jemanden finden, der aus dem Englischen eine wirklich gute Übersetzung in die Landessprache machen kann. Und dieser Übersetzungsentwurf der musste dann mit geschickt werden, weil ich bin sozusagen die Kontaktperson zu der EU-Kommission und ich kann also dann eine Sprache einreichen. Und diese Einreichung wird dann von dem Übersetzungsteam in der EU geprüft und entweder bekomme ich ein OK zurück, dass alles in Ordnung ist, dass also die Übereinstimmung mit dem Englisch stimmt, oder ich bekomme zurück, dass bestimmte Dinge noch nicht so richtig gut übersetzt sind, dann muss ich das wieder zurücksenden an den der den Entwurf gemacht hat, und dann wird das wieder verbessert und dann kann ich ihn wieder einreichen und so, aber immerhin: Jetzt haben wir inzwischen schon 15 Sprachen, die anerkannt worden sind von den Übersetzern in dem EU-Team.

Und wenn Sie jetzt nochmal zurückdenken an den Anfang der EBI, wie hat denn das angefangen, zu kommunizieren und ein Publikum zu erreichen? Was waren die ersten Schritte und was hat dann gefolgt?

Also die ganze Sache hat eine sehr große Vorgeschichte seit 2009. In verschiedenen Kongressen wurde alles mögliche diskutiert, auch ob wir überhaupt eine EBI machen. Unser erster Vorschlag für die EBI wurde auch prompt zurückgewiesen. Wir wollten nicht vorsichtig sein. Aber die Antwort der EU-Kommission war dass sie da keine Kompetenz hat. Das war natürlich schön juristisch ausformuliert und so weiter. Aber wir haben es danach eben umformuliert, dass sie aus juristischen Gründen nicht mehr ablehnen können. Und das war erfolgreich und dann haben wir am 14. Januar die Zustimmung bekommen, dass wir also

anfangen dürfen. Wir wollten ja eigentlich nicht nur eine EBI, so eine Art Agenda Setting, wo dann die EU Kommission immer noch sagen kann, sehr schön, aber das interessiert uns alles gar nicht. Sondern wir wollten ein EU-Referendum, also wo die Bürger tatsächlich darüber abstimmen können, ob sie ein sozialeres Europa wollen. Also mehr direkte Demokratie, aber das geht eben noch nicht. Also haben wir gesagt, okay, wir nutzen eben jetzt die EBI, damit das Thema zumindest in Diskussion kommt, nicht? Also wenn man eine Million Unterschriften braucht, ist das ziemlich viel, mit verschiedenen Diskussionen die Debatte anzustoßen.

Und wie organisieren Sie jetzt eben diese ganze Diskussion und dass man da zum Publikum kommt?

Ja, also hier ist die Organisation so, dass wir unterscheiden in zwei Gruppierungen. Das eine ist einmal die nationale Kampagnen, wo wir also viele Veranstaltungen planen, die Leute einladen, das Thema erläutern und dann auch sagen, und jetzt können Sie, wenn Sie wollen, auch sofort online unterschreiben und oder Sie können sich ein Papier mitnehmen und das Formular dann zuhause unterschreiben, wenn Sie es sich nochmal überlegen wollen und so weiter. Das ist die eine Seite, wo es die unterschiedlichsten Überlegungen gibt, wie man das macht. Also wir haben zum Beispiel in Österreich immer so Vorbereitungsmeetings wo jeder sagt, wie er glaubt, dass man am geschicktesten an Leute herankommt, nicht? Das sind zum Teil in den Nationalstaaten sehr unterschiedliche Dinge. Also zum Beispiel Österreich hats relativ schlecht, weil wir beim Unterschreiben auch eine Passnummer oder eine entsprechende Personalausweisnummer angeben müssen. Und das ist natürlich sehr schwer, wenn man auf der Straße steht mit dem Formular, haben die meisten gar keinen Pass mit. Und sind auch nicht bereit, die Passnummer dort öffentlich einzutragen. Das heißt, das ist für uns eine ganz große Hemmschwelle, nicht? Und dann gibt es eben so lustige Ideen wie: Okay, beim Flugplatz muss jeder einen pass mit dabei haben. Dann stellen wir uns dort mit einem Stand auf und fangen die Leute ab. Und so weiter, also so gibt's die unterschiedlichsten Dinge die jedem irgendwie einfallen. Oder da gibt's eben diese unterschiedlichsten Aktionen, dass man Luftballons mit Kärtchen versieht, die dann aufsteigen und irgendwo landen und dann steht da drauf dass man unterschreiben möge und so weiter, ja? Dann haben wir so Visitenkartenmäßig was gedruckt, wo im Endeffekt ganz kurz nu draufsteht, welche Webseite man international anwählen muss damit man dort unterschrieben kann und auf der Rückseite sind ganz kurz die Kriterien und die nationale Webseite angegeben wo man dann viele Informationen im Detail bekommt. Also dass sich das jeder genau überlegen kann. Und so geschieht das also in jedem der Länder. Aber ganz unterschiedlich. Und wir kommen da alle 4-6 Wochen zusammen und koordinieren verschiedene Aktionen. Und bei internationalen Meetings entscheiden wir dann, was sind europaweite Aktionen, die wir gemeinsam planen? Und da sind also konkret 4 Aktionen ausgemacht worden. Jetzt dann im Juli in Athen findet ein alternativer Gipfel statt, gegen die derzeitige EU-Politik, auf allen Bereichen, auch im Sozialen, Und dort nehmen wir Teil und unter anderem, nachdem da ganz Europa vertreten ist, mit allen Ländern, eben auch werben für unsere EBI, auch mit der Möglichkeit zu unterschreiben und wir haben auch schon mit der griechischen Gruppe Kontakt aufgenommen, damit wir dann gemeinsame Sachen machen. Die nächste Aktion ist der 14. September in Berlin. Und zwar wird dort eine Großdemonstration, wirklich von ganz Europa. Das Grundeinkommen ist ein Menschenrecht ist der Titel und mit 100000 Leuten soll das Ganze also wirklich ganz publikumswirksam und pressewirksam und medienwirksam gestaltet werden. Und dazu ist es dann geplant, dass wir uns am Abend treffen, diskutieren und am nächsten Tag einen ganzen Tag dort weiterplanen. Also dass man da nicht extra reisen muss, sondern dass man da möglichst das nächste Meeting gleich machen kann. Wir haben eben festgestellt, Skype-Konferenzen sind sehr wertvoll, aber wenn es so viele Leute sind, ist es kompliziert. Der dritte Punkt ist dass wir eine internationale Woche des Grundeinkommens

ausrufen, das heißt, hier ist es so, dass wir in der Woche vom 16.-22.9. in jedem Land in jeder Stadt Veranstaltungen machen. In Österreich haben wir das schonmal gemacht, und das wirkt das dann besser. Und das ist ja schon in Nähe des Endes, also das Ende ist ja im Januar, bis dahin müssen wir genug haben, das heißt wir müssen noch mehr Druck machen. Und wir haben übrigens über unsere Homepage die Statistiken der Länder bei den Unterschriften, wie viele da an jedem Tag in jedem Land dazu gekommen sind. Und wieviele das insgesamt sind. Das ist natürlich motivierend, dass wenn da eine Veranstaltung gemacht wurde dass dann am nächsten Tag viele zusätzlich mehr unterschreiben. Also das ist recht nett. Und es gibt da auch alles was es so gibt an Papierformaten, also für jedes Land schaut das ja anders aus und da ist es eben auch so dass wenn ein Land eine Übersetzung hat, dann kann ich das auch herunterladen und sagen: Da ist es jetzt.

Die Webseite ist also ein wichtiger Punkt in der Kommunikation? Und welche sind sonst noch wichtig? Facebook? Twitter? Wie nutzen Sie die?

Also das wichtigste ist wirklich die internationale Webseite. Und dann haben wir Facebook, in Facebook gibt's eben die ganzen Einzelgruppen aller Übersetzer zum Beispiel. Weil das ist auch wichtig, also die Übersetzer sind ja auch verfügbar wenn irgendjemand in irgendeinem Land einen netten Artikel in seiner Sprache gemacht hat, dann gibt er es an das Übersetzungsteam und die können das dann in die anderen Sprachen auch übersetzen. Also das macht die Vielfalt dann der unterschiedlichsten Artikel aus. Also diese Gruppe ist ständig aktiv. Und dann gibt es eine Gruppe, die kreativ ist. Also es gibt jetzt das Logo in verschiedenen Sprachen, zum Beispiel. Und dann gibt's eine ganze Menge an Aktivitäten, man kann zum Beispiel T-Shirts bestellen, das macht also auch die Niederlande und da kann man T-Shirts mit dem Logo und der Aufschrift bestellen und dann kostet das 5 Euro und die Vorgabe ist dass wenn man die um 10 Euro verkauft, dann hat man 5 Euro gespart, um wieder Flyer drucken zu können und so weiter. Das ist zum Beispiel auch so ein Punkt: Wir haben Null Geld. Wir haben keine Finanzen sondern nur am Anfang als das ganze gestartet worden ist sind alle Organisationen die am Anfang dabei waren gefragt worden: Könnt ihr nicht ein bisschen was spenden? Also auf die Art und Weise haben wir ungefähr 1500 Euro, also nicht mehr. Also das hat am Anfang so ausgesehen: Wie will man da eine Riesen Kampagne machen? Und da haben wir ein Riesen Glück gehabt dass aufgrund der Kritik, dass man finanziell nicht unterstützt wird, dass alles teuer ist und so weiter, hat die EU Kommission das Angebot des Hostings gemacht. Und zwar hat sie uns angeboten dass sie uns kostenlos ihren Server in Luxemburg zur Verfügung stellt, für diese Webseite. Und das war natürlich eine tolle Sache! Also wir haben dadurch Null Kosten und konnten starten und haben nach der ersten Woche, nach den Zertifikat aus allen 27 Ländern die ersten Unterschriften bekommen, ja? Also das ist natürlich ganz gewaltig. Und natürlich ist das jetzt sehr günstig. Schwierig wird's dann wenn man auch an die Kommunikation mit Leuten denkt, die kein Internet haben. Und das sind natürlich immer noch viele auch. Vor allem in Ländern des Ostens und so. Und da ist es eben so, dass wir zum Beispiel... Briefe schreiben an alle Leute, die wir wissen, dass sie an dem Thema interessiert sind, weil wir davor die Adressen gesammelt haben. Also das ist jetzt gerade im Gange. Da haben wir rund 6000 Adressen. Und von denen haben rund 1000 keine E-Mail-Adresse angegeben, nur die Postadresse. Und jetzt bedeutet das für uns, dass wenn wir denen die Möglichkeit geben wollen, zu unterschreiben, dass wir denen einen Brief schicken müssen, ein Formular mit Rückporto dazugeben müssen und das wieder zurückbekommen. Und dann ist natürlich jede Unterschrift wirklich teuer. Auch wenn man die Arbeitszeit mit einer Freiwilligengruppe sagt, okay, das machen wir halt, aber die Portokosten fallen an! Also solche Sachen sind dann immer schwierig. Also da wissen wir noch nicht, wie wir es machen, ob wir zum Beispiel bei der nationalen Webseite ein Konto angeben und sagen wenn Sie uns unterstützen wollen, spenden Sie auf das Konto. Also das überlegen wir noch, ob das Sinn macht. Weil offiziell bekommen wir ja von niemandem

Geld, weil wir gegen das System arbeiten. Also, wenn das bedingungslose Grundeinkommen eingeführt wird, dann ist das entgegen der herrschenden Interessen, eindeutig. Daher unterstützt uns niemand offiziell.

Mhm. Und wie versuchen Sie, mit anderen Medien in Kontakt zu treten, also zum Beispiel Radio oder Fernsehen?

Da ist es so, wir haben im Internet Live-Stream-Sendungen. Machen wir zum Beispiel gerade heute ab 18 Uhr, und da sind wir zu viert oder fünft und machen eine Live Unterhaltung wo alle zuhören können, wenn sie wollen, also in dem Fall ist es heute auf Deutsch.

Aber ist das dann auf Ihrer nationalen Webseite?

Das ist von einem unserer Mitarbeiter, der so ein Kommunikationsmittel hat, wo jedenfalls dann diskutiert und aufgenommen wird, damit man das nachträglich auch ins Netz stellen kann, Und da kann man sich auch zuschalten, da kann jemand anrufen, der kann dann hereingenommen werden und kann sein Statement abgeben und das machen wir zum Beispiel. Wir versuchen natürlich über Zeitungen, also Printmedien reinzukommen und einiges ist uns schon gelungen, manchmal haben sie eine ganze Seite zum bedingungslosen Grundeinkommen abgedruckt. Und dann hat das manchmal natürlich große Folgen, weil dann gibt es auf der Printmedienseite, die haben dann meist auch online den gleichen Artikel, und dann gibt es da dann 1000 Kommentare. Das können wir natürlich alles nicht planen. Das ist überhaupt eines unserer Probleme, dass wir zu wenig Leute haben, die schon so, sozusagen sattelfest sind, dass sie sich trauen Veranstaltungen zu organisieren und selbst das zu verantworten. Und da haben wir jetzt vor, so dreitägige Multiplikatorenschulungen zu machen. Damit wir, die, die also schon etabliert sind, ein bisschen entlastet sind und nicht immer nur wir eingeladen werden zu irgendwelchen Vorträgen und so. Weil wir einfach überlastet sind.

Und fokussieren Sie auch Ihr Publikum, also wen sprechen Sie konkret an?

Also wir wollen grundsätzlich alle Leute ansprechen, haben aber natürlich zielgruppenorientierte Überlegungen. Und eine davon ist, eine davon ist: Bei uns gibt es das sogenannte Arbeitmarktservice. Das ist so ähnlich wie Harz 4 das gibt es eben in Österreich auch und da müssen die Leute eben immer hingehen und nachweisen, dass sie sich eh bewerben und nur wenn sie sich immer bewerben dann kriegen sie das weiter ausgezahlt und so. Also in Wirklichkeit ist es eine Stigmatisierung der Leute die zum Teil gar nichts dafür können, dass sie arbeitslos geworden sind. Und da haben wir gedacht, also da kommen ja die Betroffenen hin und für die müsste ja das bedingungslose Grundeinkommen wenn sie ohne dass sie da alles nachweisen müssen, also dass sie es einfach bekommen, ohne irgendeinen bürokratischen Aufwand... Also und die müssen doch begeistert sein und die müssen unterschreiben. Und dann waren wir da zum Beispiel, also mit meiner Frau und unserem Enkel und waren da in so einem AMS Service und haben dort die Zettel verteilt. Und dann ist natürlich eine Angestellte gekommen und hat gesagt was machen Sie denn da? Also weil das ist ja gerade das Konzept, das sie gerade haben. Und das haben wir der Dame dann erklärt und dass es eine EBI ist. Und das ist der große Vorteil einer Europäischen Bürgerinitiative. Die Aktion bedeutet mehr. Und dann hat die gesagt, dann müssen Sie zum Vorstand. Und dann sind wir da hin und dann sagt die, das muss die Landesstelle entscheiden, ob wir das dürfen. Und dann sind wir eben zur Landesstelle gefahren. Und dann haben wir da die Unterlagen dort gelassen und zu meiner Überraschung hat der gesagt, dass er persönlich fürs bedingungslose Grundeinkommen ist. Aber natürlich nicht beruflich, nicht? Und naja, dass er schaut, was man da machen kann. Und heute früh hat er mich wieder angerufen und gesagt, er hat das geklärt und hat gesagt, also wir dürfen in den Gebäuden nicht verteilen, aber 2-3

Meter vom Haupteingang schon. Und wir sollen ihn halt immer informieren. Und das finde ich natürlich toll. Also so werden wir in ganz Österreich, da gibt es ja massenhaft AMS Stellen, werden wir Standorte mit Betroffenen haben.

Sie sind jetzt selbst aus Österreich, also da ist es relativ wahrscheinlich, dass Sie es mit viel Engagement schaffen, die Stimmen zusammenzubekommen. Aber ist es nicht schwierig, es in anderen Ländern auch zu schaffen?

Ja, also das ist natürlich das große Problem. Also dass wir die beiden Kriterien nicht erreichen. Aber wir haben da so kleine Tricks. Also wir haben zum Beispiel eine Dame aus Finnland, die sehr gute Kontakte zu Malta hat. Und dort ist ja die Anzahl der Unterschriften sehr gering. Und sie fährt jetzt dann nach Malta und versucht, dort die Unterschriften zu organisieren. Dann haben wir ein Land, das nicht viele Unterschriften braucht, aber wir haben ein Land. Und momentan ist es ja überhaupt noch ein Problem, weil wir ja bei weitem noch nicht in der Größenordnung sind, von einer Million. Also zum Beispiel in Spanien sind es bisher nur 3.000 Unterschriften, das ist nicht viel. Aber Belgien hat zum Beispiel schon fast 4000 und Frankreich mit 8000, Deutschland fast 10000, interessanterweise Ungarn und Slovenien sind ganz stark. Also es wird schon. Und ganz viel ist auch persönliches Gespräch. Also zum Beispiel im Zug ein Gespräch anfangen. Und was auch interessant ist, ist die Schweiz.

Ja, aber die Schweiz ist ja nicht in der EU.

Ja genau, die Schweiz hat einen riesen Vorteil gegenüber der EU, weil sie die direkte Demokratie ja schon haben. Das heißt, die Motivation, dort zu unterschreiben, für etwas das dann abgestimmt wird, ist viel größer, weil sie es ja mitentscheiden können. Und die haben also... mit ungefähr der gleichen Einwohnerzahl wie Österreich... haben die innerhalb von einem halben Jahr über 100000 Unterschriften auf Papier gesammelt. Also die geben am 4. Oktober die Papiere ab, und dann wird in der Schweiz abgestimmt, ob das bedingungslose Grundeinkommen eingeführt wird. Also das ist ja unglaublich! Also wenn das gelingen würde, wäre das ein tolles Signal für Europa, dass sich Europa auf seine sozialen Kompetenzen besinnt.

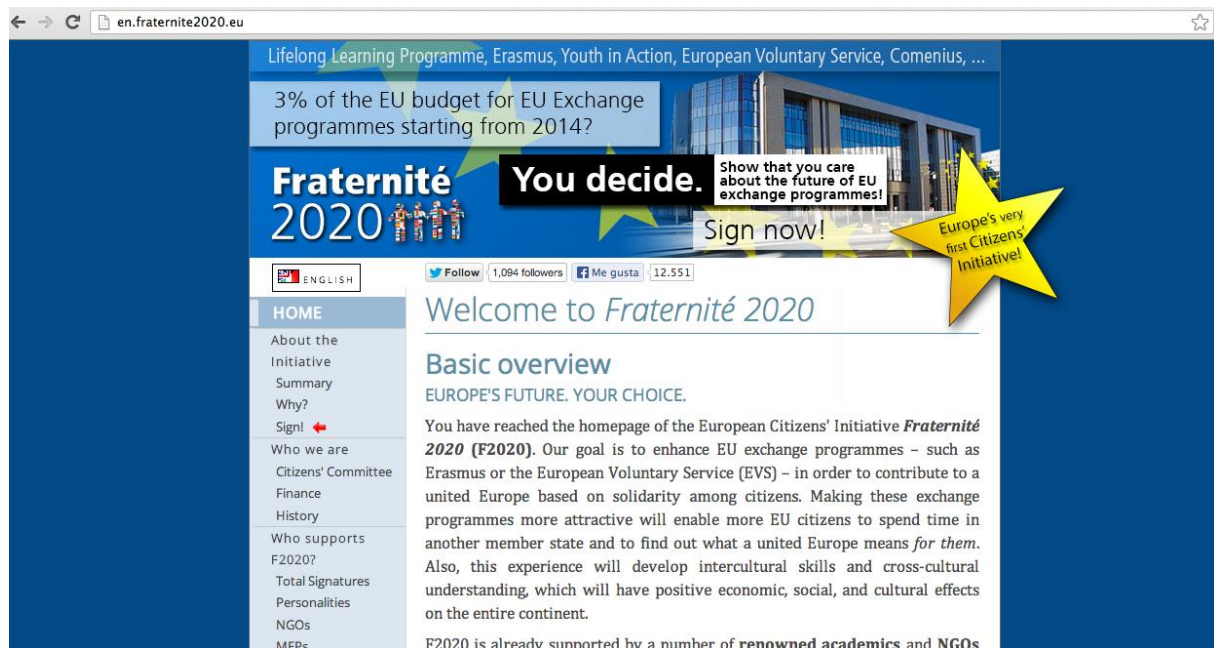
Ja das stimmt.

Und was wir jetzt auch machen, ist dass wir alle Abgeordneten angeschrieben haben in Österreich, wir haben ja auch Wahlen jetzt, ob sie uns ein Interview geben und dass wir sie fragen dürfen was sie vom bedingungslosen Grundeinkommen halten. Und das war auch sehr interessant, da gibt es die ersten Rückmeldungen, dahaben wir also die ersten Termine für Rückmeldungen. Also das wird dann auch medienwirksam. Und schließlich wollen wir auch noch Lobbying in Brüssel machen und da die Parlamentarier befragen, was sie zum Bedingungslosen Grundeinkommen halten. Und wir haben auch einen Mann dafür, dass der eine Liste erstellt, von Journalisten aus allen Ländern, dass wenn wir etwas kommunizieren wollen, dass das dann gleich an alle geht. Das wäre so etwas. Oder dass man andere Gruppierungen, die ähnliche soziale Ideen haben, auch in einer Liste zusammenfasst und dann gesammelt anschreiben kann. Also diese Geschichten sollen über einige Leute nun durchgeführt werden.

Aha. Sehr interessant. Dann weiterhin viel Erfolg und vielen Dank!

6.3 Screenshots of ECI's websites

Fraternité 2020



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by GREGORP on 27/10/2010

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Pour une gestion responsable des déchets

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PICTURES (photos)



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SIGN ! (signez l'initiative citoyenne européenne)...

... FOR MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBLE WASTE, AGAINST INCINERATORS !
(pour une gestion responsable des déchets, contre les incinérateurs !)

For sign (pour signer) :

1. Download the form and print (télécharger le formulaire et imprimer) ;

ECI - slovakia
ECI - Deutch

SURVEY (Sondage)

Je soutiens cette initiative citoyenne ! (I'm ok with this european citizen initiative)

☐ OUI (yes)
☐ NON (no)

Voter

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ITEMS (Rubriques)

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